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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Jeremiah Tries Reading

THE ghost of Jeremiah pauses for more adequate words as he broods over the American scene. A riot of corruption, ribaldry, drunkenness, miscegenation; murder, theft, swindling, and sexual depravity; fanaticism, hypocrisy, stupidity, and self-seeking. Lynchings, bombings, predatory men seeking special privilege at any cost to the community, Congress jumping at every snap of the pension whip, judges indicted, banks failing, hungry people in the richest country in the world, churches more concerned with prohibiting the unprohibitable, drink or birth control, than in practising either Christianity or common sense, newspapers that head their crime stories "Murder Crudely Performed" or "Bank Robbery Fumbled," as if a football game had been badly played, young college men in novels wailing a drunken distrust of everything including themselves, young college women telling in the magazines how they take jobs away from the oldest profession in the world, women wearing make-ups that would have shocked Jezebel and seemed a little excessive to the Greek Cleopatra. A population cynically preparing for a war that will mean more excitement, although for the first time in history it is fully informed as to what war means, and for the first time since savagery is in danger of a general massacre. A country in which, with no effective restraint, since there can be none that does not come from character, every commercial adventurer is allowed to exploit the morals, the intelligence, the taste, and the emotions of the public by bunkum, vulgarity, the appeal to violence, triviality on the air, bestiality in the tabloids, falsity and sham on the screen, cynicism in books, depravity on the stage. A country in which they sing "O Beautiful for spacious skies" in the public schools, while the bootleggers wait on the outside for the children, politicians appoint the teachers, big business controls the politicians for its own ends, and good women go to meetings and urge more laws to stop everything!

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So far speaks Jeremiah, with his language censored for publication, and his darker charges omitted. And so far might speak any American after a week of newspapers, radio, screen dramas, musical comedies, pulp magazines, realistic literature, and general conversation. Is it all true? Probably. Is it the whole truth? Of course it isn't, but no one tells us so except publicists paid to talk, the advertising columns, boosters, and a common sense scarcely heard among all this stridency.

* * *

For this is what American books, American newspapers, American magazines are increasingly being made of. These are the human goods (ironic term!) we advertise in the columns beside the electric refrigerator advertisements and the bargain sales of dry goods in the department stores. How an honest school child can sing "O Beautiful" after reading a tabloid passes our comprehension. News of the "land of our father's pride" is a dump heap of the most seabrous descriptions since Swift (and not so well written either), and the worst exhibitionism of vulgar ugliness in the history of taste.

We have not joined the reformers. We don't want to stop anything—or, at least, not much. We don't want more laws. We would not censor the most vulgar tabloid, or the most hypocritical movie, for fear that the populace that battens on such stuff would pay for something worse. We would not suppress the brutality and cynicism, the pathology and obsession of the sadistic fiction which is circulating so widely. Its writers are protesting in their fashion against the false jollity, the shallow sentiment, and the cheap optimism of the stereotyped best seller, and the stale formulas of the advertisers' nation-wide magazines. We have no faith in prohibition, singular or plural.

But if this Jeremiad is not all of the truth, and certainly it is not, where are the writers who can say so with imagination, who can make us feel that humanity is still likable, that the United States is still worth living in, that the man perhaps is better than the book he reads, that the old dog honesty has life in him yet, in spite of the fleas that plague him? They seem to have been sleeping lately, or writing with dull pens. We need them as badly as we needed a critical spirit in the age of Pollyanna. But no doctrinaires with sure-fire ethics need apply; no prohibitionists; no psychologists, sociologists, or engineers, ready to make us over if we will only do what the text-book says. We want imagination, the kind that makes the young men see visions which are neither nightmares nor Freudian wish fulfilments, and the old men take heart. We need imagination that can get off the ground without going into a tail spin and landing in a garbage heap.

Lullaby

By JOHN HALL WHEELOCK

NIGHT comes on,
Night, and the peace you have desired—
Earth is calling, you are tired;
Earth draws you down.

The hope, the fear,
The labor, vain—your heart grows cold.
Time's secret is untold.
The light fails that led you here.

Sleep, then; sleep is best —
The roads are many where we go astray;
All, all, by the one way
Come home, at the one heart have rest.

This Week

"The Menace of Overproduction."
Reviewed by FABIAN FRANKLIN.

"God without Thunder."
Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.

"Dreamy Rivers."
Reviewed by BROOKS SHEPARD.

"The Red Trade Menace."
Reviewed by HENRY KITTREDGE NORTON.

"Ending in Earnest."
Reviewed by H. C. TRACY.

"John Wesley."
Reviewed by HERBERT ASBURY.

"We Take to Bed."
Reviewed by DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER.

"The Making of a Lady."
Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM.

John Mistletoe, XXVIII.
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

Mark My Words.
By HILAIRE BELLOC.

Overproduction Terror*

By FABIAN FRANKLIN

THE title of Mr. Hamlin's book is happily chosen. It strikes the keynote of a multitude of books and magazine articles that have been appearing for several years past, a few of which are named, by way of sample, at the foot of this column.

The idea that in overproduction there lies a menace to the general welfare, or at least to the welfare of a large portion of the population, is indeed far older; traces of it may be found almost as far back as one chooses to go. And it was not in the last few years that the following passage was written about the sad plight of the captains of industry in the presence of modern advances in the means of production:

> From selfishness they themselves refrain from consuming, while with a blind eagerness they continue to set up new establishments of production to produce things that no one can buy. Seated in the midst of all the means of enjoyment, they can neither make up their minds to let the laborers standing around them reap the benefits, nor to make use of them themselves. Like another Sisyphus, they torment themselves with an insoluble contradiction—a desire to sell, after they have deprived the buyer of the means wherewith to buy. Present-day society may, indeed, be well compared to a band of travellers in the desert. Suffering with thirst, they find a spring which would suffice to refresh and strengthen them all; but a small number constitute themselves masters of the spring; they grudge giving the majority more than a few drops to quench their thirst; they themselves take long draughts, but the stream flows faster than they are able to drink, and so from satiety and want of goodwill they let half of the gushing stream waste itself in the sand.

This was said by Karl Rodbertus, perhaps the keenest of all the apostles of socialism, in the year 1850, in his book "Overproduction and Crises." Eighty years have gone by, eighty years of expansion in the range and potency of machine production beyond the wildest dreams of Rodbertus and his contemporaries; and yet his words would need but little alteration to make them match the current talk of today about the menace of overproduction.

* * *

Against this notion that, under the existing order of society, it is impossible for consumption to keep pace with the advance of production, the accepted authorities on economics have stood out with substantial unanimity. In essence, their answer on the side of theory has been that since human wants are unlimited, and since the power of purchasing the means of supplying those wants is, in the last analysis, furnished by the production itself, production cannot, as a lasting and general phenomenon, outrun the capacity of consumption; and on the side of experience they have simply pointed to the fact that the expansion of production has been going on at a stupendous rate for a hundred years and more, without producing any cumulative excess of production over consumption.

Within the last three or four years, however, there has been a certain weakening in the line of defence. While doubtless the great majority of qualified economists have stood firm in the faith, there have been here and there signs of defection in the ranks. Even before the stock market collapse of 1929, the problem of unemployment—which is serious enough in the best of times, and which, during the past de-

* THE MENACE OF OVERPRODUCTION. Edited by SCOVILLE HAMLIN. New York: John Wiley & Son. 1930. $2.75.
PROSPERITY, FACT OR MYTH. By STUART CHASE. New York: A. & C. Boni. 1930. 50 cents.
THE END OF AN EPOCH. By STUART CHASE. New York: *Saturday Review of Literature*, Nov. 22, 1930.

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cade, has in some instances been aggravated by the swift development of methods of mass production—had caused unusual attention to be directed to the hardships entailed upon workers displaced by new machines and new methods. The old view was very well—so ran the thought of many—so long as the industrial advance took place at a reasonable rate; but with this unparalleled rush of new machines and new efficiency, we can no longer adhere to ancient formulas. For a hundred years we have resolutely turned our faces away from the suggestion that overproduction would spell our economic doom; but now at last we exclaim, like the Lady of Shalott, "The curse has come upon us."

For an adequate discussion of the grounds for this belief, this is not the proper place; nor could such a discussion be attempted within the limits of a short article. In two respects, however, the position taken by the present-day exponents of the overproduction terror may, I think, be profitably subjected to criticism, even within the compass of such an article.

* * *

The first of these criticisms concerns a mere clarification of ideas. When these writers stress the hardships imposed upon the toiling masses by unemployment, and the losses suffered by other classes through the vicissitudes of the business cycle, no one can say them nay. When they go farther, and declare that these evils are a grave defect of our economic system and a reproach to our economic intelligence, it is difficult to deny the justice of their criticism. When they go still farther, and assert that all this distress and maladjustment, instead of being lessened as time goes on, has become graver than ever in these latest years of technological progress, they enter upon more debatable ground, but still can make out a good *prima facie* case. In all this, however, there is nothing new or startling. It is in the step which they take beyond all this that the gravamen of their thesis lies; and the criticism I have in mind is that they do not realize the nature of this step, and the requirements of the reasoning essential to its justification. For the step in question is nothing less than the transition from recognizing existing evils and tendencies to asserting that these evils are in their very nature cumulative, these tendencies incurably progressive. I say that they do not realize this distinction; and of course this is something of an overstatement. They are not absolutely unaware of the distinction; but in most of what they say they virtually ignore it. Swept on by the impetus of their attack upon economic imperfection, and by their emotional sympathy with those who suffer from it, they enter their verdict of inescapable doom upon the existing order, with but little consideration of the possibilities, or even the probabilities, of its future development.

The second criticism relates to the quality of the evidence which, when they do recognize the need of specific evidence, they are content to accept as sufficient to justify their conclusions. Of this, a striking example occurs in Mr. Chase's little book, "Prosperity, Fact or Myth"—an example in some ways so peculiarly instructive that I may be pardoned for dwelling on it at greater length than its intrinsic importance may seem to justify. Mr. Chase says:

> Some economists doubt the fact of technological unemployment in the sense of an ever greater reserve army. Perhaps it is too soon to be absolutely sure of the curve, but the trend is certainly in that direction. Mr. Wesley C. Mitchell has compiled certain figures which are sufficiently indicative of the trend—and sufficiently alarming. His computations are exhaustive and technical, dealing with the new labor supply since 1920, and the new jobs available, all reduced to net changes. He concludes flatly: "*The supply of new jobs has not been equal to the number of new workers plus the old workers displaced. Hence there has been a net increase of unemployment between* 1920 *and* 1927, *which exceeds* 650,000 *people.*"

Now, what makes this so peculiarly instructive is that Professor Mitchell is one of the ablest and most level-headed of American economists, and that he really did say, without any qualification in the immediate context, just what Mr. Chase quotes him as saying. The italics, to be sure, are Mr. Chase's and not Professor Mitchell's; and so, too, is the statement that the figures "are sufficiently indicative of the trend—and sufficiently alarming." Yet Professor Mitchell *did* give to any man on the lookout for portents of evil a most satisfactory opportunity for sounding the alarm, when he said that "there has been a net increase of unemployment, between 1920 and 1927, which exceeds 650,000 people," thus showing that "the supply of new jobs has not been equal to the number of new workers plus the old workers displaced"; and the remarkable thing is that this statement, though made by so careful an economist as Professor Mitchell, is shown by his own table to be so misleading as to be entirely unjustified.

That table relates solely to the years 1920 to 1927, inclusive. It gives for each of these years the total number of urban wage and salary workers in the country, the minimum number of these workers that were unemployed, and the percentage-ratio which the latter number bears to the former. Now, to begin with, the total number, which in 1920 was 27,558,000, had risen in 1927 to 32,695,000; and accordingly, although the number of unemployed had risen from 1,401,000 to 2,055,000, their *percentage* of the total had risen only from 5.1 per cent to 6.3 per cent. This however, is not the main reason for objecting to the form of Professor Mitchell's statement; indeed it is of relatively minor importance. The thing that is fatal to its significance,—in any such sense as Mr. Chase ascribes to it, or even as any ordinary reader would ascribe to it,—is something quite different and far simpler: namely, that for the year 1926 the table gives the number of unemployed as only 1,669,000, out of a total of 31,808,000, and the percentage of unemployed as 5.2, a percentage hardly distinguishable from the 5.1 given for the year 1920. Accordingly, if Professor Mitchell had happened to be writing a year earlier than he actually did, he would have had practically no increase of unemployment to point to at all—no basis for the assertion that "the supply of new jobs has not been equal to the number of new workers plus the old workers displaced." He himself, indeed, does not stress the significance of the statement in any such way as it is stressed by Mr. Chase, and a careful reading of all the accompanying matter shows how qualified is his confidence even in the figures themselves; but it must be accounted as a reproach that he gave to the showing of the single year 1927 in comparison with the single year 1920 the appearance of a trend exhibited by the facts of a seven-year period. The whole thing is open to other grounds of statistical doubt; but into these I cannot enter. What I have said is sufficient to show how infinitely short of the truth is Mr. Chase's admission that "perhaps it is too soon to be absolutely sure of the curve," and how far from justified is his statement that "the figures are sufficiently indicative of the trend, and sufficiently alarming."

* * *

Although, as I have said, the title of Mr. Hamlin's book, "The Menace of Overproduction," strikes the keynote of a multitude of recent publications on the subject, it is very different from them in actual content. While most of them rest upon general impressions, or upon statistical arguments as vulnerable as that which I have just been discussing, Mr. Hamlin's book consists in the main of a formidable array of specific accounts of the actual conditions existing in various departments of production. Each of these accounts forms a separate chapter of the book, and each of them is written by a man of the highest standing in the field in question, and undoubtedly conversant with the facts. The range and character of these chapters may be sufficiently indicated by noting the titles and authors of a few of them. Chapter I, on the bituminous mining industry, is by C. E. Bockus, President of the National Coal Association; Chapter II, on the oil industry, by E. P. Salisbury, Statistician of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey; Chapter V, on the silk industry, by Thomas B. Hill, President of the Silk Association of America; Chapter VII, on agriculture, by Dr. O. E. Barnes, Senior Agricultural Economist, U. S. Department of Agriculture. And all these high practical authorities strike the same note: overproduction is the burden of their song. Nor can the skeptic take refuge in the supposition that it is merely the conditions prevalent in the hard times of the present business slump that these men are thinking of; on the contrary, the thing upon which most of them chiefly lay stress is the inherent excess of the capacity to produce over the possibility of disposal of the product.

In another direction, indeed, there is presented by these papers a chance of escape from the conclusion that we are at last face to face with the terrible results of increasing productivity which Rodbertian Cassandras have so long been prophesying. Each of these authorities, I think without exception, points to some method of so organizing the industry with which he deals—so controlling the impulses of competition, so adjusting supply to demand by concerted or coördinated action—as to keep production within proper bounds. On these suggestions I cannot venture to pass judgment; they are doubtless all worthy of close attention, and nothing short of a thorough study of each would suffice to justify a definite estimate of its value. But, much as one would welcome the conclusion that the troubles of the producers in these great lines of activity could be ended by the adoption of the remedies proposed, one cannot help feeling grave doubt whether they are practically capable of achieving that result.

If, then, I do not stand appalled at the situation existing in so many of the major departments of production, it is neither because I question the existence of the difficulties dwelt upon by these high authorities, nor because I am confident of the adequacy of the measures which they propose for the surmounting of these difficulties. It is for a reason which some may dismiss as crude and antiquated, but which I see no reason for regarding as any the less sound because of its simplicity. The center of the difficulties—so much the graver part of them that the rest is almost negligible in comparison—is not the actual production of an excess of consumable goods but the potentiality of such production; not too much rayon but too much machinery for making rayon, not too much oil but too many oil wells, and the like. Now, even if this state of things exists not only in many departments but in *all* departments of what may broadly be designated by the term mass production, this does not mean that man is under some fatal spell to continue the overproduction of the machinery of such production; still less does it mean that there are not, in other directions, unfulfilled desires to the satisfaction of which production might profitably be turned. And, painful as may be the process of correction, there is not the slightest reason to doubt that that process will be entered upon in one way or another, and that it will be successful. It will be successful, of course, only in that rough and imperfect way in which all the adjustments of supply to demand, in a competitive régime, are successful; but I see no reason to believe that its difficulties or hardships will be any more severe than those that have attended a score of readjustments which have been made necessary by the developments of the century and a half since Watt invented his steam engine.

* * *

The thesis propounded by the exponents of the overproduction terror is one of the greatest moment, practically as well as theoretically. Its acceptance would have, as an immediate and necessary consequence, the adoption of radical changes in the conduct of almost every form of enterprise; and in the event—far from improbable—that these changes failed to put an end to the evils which they were designed to remove, the logical next step would be the adoption of a change still more radical, a change to communism or at least to some extreme form of socialism. A thesis which is big with consequences of such moment should not be proposed on unsubstantial grounds or maintained by amateurish reasoning. The object of this article has been not to disprove the thesis, but to indicate the weaknesses of the case made out by its advocates. A few words in conclusion, to remind the reader of the nature of these weaknesses, may not be amiss.

In the first place, the statistical evidence adduced is not only pitifully meagre in itself, but is used, without either critical examination or logical analysis, to warrant conclusions of such gravity as to demand the application of the highest standards of scientific inquiry. Between these easy-going ways and the strenuous requirements which are fulfilled as a matter of course by investigators in the physical sciences the contrast is so glaring as to be almost ludicrous. A chief result of this laxity is an almost incredible absence of any endeavor to distinguish between proof that a tendency exists and proof that the tendency will continue, or even that it is likely to continue. A few statistical scraps, such as in a corresponding question in physics would be regarded as furnishing at most a hint of the truth, are accepted as almost conclusive demonstration.

But it is not only on the statistical side that we encounter the failure to take adequate precautions before pronouncing judgment. If a man is brooding over the possibilities of readjustment, as these men presumably are, it surely ought to occur to his mind that a readjustment may be qualitative as well as quantitative; that a change may take place in the kind, as well as in the amount, of things produced. In fact, a change in kind has been an inevitable factor, and indeed the predominant factor, in the economic development of the modern world. Generation after generation has seen millions of workers re-

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leased from old fields of production through the introduction of labor-saving machinery, and occupied in the satisfaction of new needs, new desires, new enjoyments. Throughout this process, it is demand that has been the ultimate arbiter of supply; and if the time has come when increase of quantity in present lines of production is no longer profitable, when perhaps things dependent less on machine-made abundance and more on individual excellence or beauty hold out the best prospect of profit, is there any reason to doubt that supply will flow, as it always has flowed, into the channels marked out for it by the possibilities of demand?

Perhaps, if these things be pondered, one may find a certain appropriateness in the naive remark which made Col. Fred Grant famous some forty years ago. It was a time when all the wise heads in politics and finance were turning grey over the problem of the Treasury surplus. "After all," said the unsophisticated Colonel, "a surplus is easier to handle than a deficit." And I am inclined to think that he was more than half right.

Swinging Round the Circle

GOD WITHOUT THUNDER. By John Crowe Ransom. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1930. $3.50.

Reviewed by Ernest Sutherland Bates

THE reading of John Crowe Ransom's "God without Thunder" reminds me of an incident in my childhood. A certain boy of my acquaintance spent weeks before the Fourth of July in making a magnificent collection of fireworks, which were carefully sorted and arranged in a huge box. On the evening of the Fourth the box was brought out and the exhibition began, but with the first piece a spark fell into the box. There followed a few moments of bewildering display: Roman candles shooting in every direction, rockets sending their stars into a neighbor's window, pin-wheels sputtering ignominiously, Bengal lights of strange hue blazing. It was certainly a brilliant pyrotechnical exhibition, but to the small boy owner it seemed a bit disorderly.

Mr. Ransom's book is similarly stimulating and disconcerting. One settles down comfortably at the beginning to enjoy an attack on modern science but almost immediately discovers that the attack is really on the Higher Criticism of the Bible; by the time the reader has brought up his memories of the Tübingen School, Strauss, Pfleiderer, Harnack, Cheyne, etc., to check the author's conclusions, he finds that Mr. Ransom has left him and is off on the trail of the anthropologists; following hot-footed, he next catches sight of the author pot-shotting mathematicians and philosophers; when he has finally caught up with the victor of so many fights and wishes to examine the loot, alas, the exhibition is over and the box is empty.

On cool reëxamination, however, the book does prove to have a central idea, such as it is. This turns upon the two divergent functions which the concept of God has always possessed, that of causal explanation and that of moral inspiration: God as the transcendent cause behind phenomena, and God as the ideal of perfection. The progress of religion is usually supposed to have consisted in the gradual moralizing of various forms of nature worship into ethical religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. This, however, has developed the latent conflict between the two functions of God. As cause He is responsible for the effect: but the universe which He is supposed to have created is far from a God-like or even decently moral universe, at least if this world is a fair sample of it. Various methods of escape have been devised: the concept of a devil, the concept of a limited god, etc. Modernism solves the problem by ignoring it and by setting up on subjective grounds the god of its own heart—a Benevolent Big Business God, a kind of transcendental Henry Ford, who according to the needs of the hour sends out peace ships or transforms His factories into munition works.

With this Morenist god, John Crowe Ransom, stout-hearted Southern agrarian, thinks he will have naught to do. Seeing clearly that a god who is a mere metaphor for a human ideal is really no god at all, he has great fun with what he calls the "soft scientists," like Mr. Millikan, whose inconsistencies offer an easy target. On the other hand, the "hard scientists," like Mr. Huxley, suit him no better, and the hard philosophers like Mr. Bertrand Russell are even worse, for they are confident that they can get along without any god at all. Mr. Ransom is at his best—which is a brilliant best—in the chapters showing the inadequacy of science to deal with the full reality of the concrete individual and its inability to handle the problems of the infinite and the surd. Since reason leads to skepticism and he is more interested in avoiding skepticism than in reason, he resorts, quite like Mr. Millikan, to myth, but he wants a myth which will be adequate to the complex phenomena it represents. The myths of western Christianity are too fully humanized to serve this purpose; those of the Greek Church are better; best of all were the myths of the Old Testament with its inscrutable Jehovah, above good and evil. So Mr. Ransom rounds the circle and ends in worshipping a tribal god of power. But this is virtually the same being as the American Big Business God whom he set out to reject, for the Big Business God's benevolent smile is surely only a polite mannerism which Mr. Ransom, of all men, is too intelligent to take seriously.

Jacket design for "The Making of a Lady," by Sara Haardt
(*See page* 629)

An Elfin Book

DREAMY RIVERS. By Henry Baerlein. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by Brooks Shepard

NOT since Logan Pearsall Smith suavely dedicated his "Trivia" to a group that included "The Baboon, with his Bright Blue and Scarlet Bottom" has this reviewer seen a more happily unconventional dedication than Henry Baerlein's, to a little Slovak boy with an immense name.

> . . . You will not, I feel sure, reveal any of my inaccuracies, exaggerations, lacunæ, obscurities, and so forth, for you have a kindly disposition. . . . The other day you were proposing to examine more closely a herd of sheep, but as you started to walk across the field your mother spoke a word of warning. "They do not know you," she said. Then with a ceremonial bow you told them that your name is Janos Radvanszky. "And now," you said, "they know me." It may be more difficult to acquire a knowledge of Slovakia; yet, I repeat, you will be indulgent. And as, in this respect, I feel more certain of you than of other people, it is to you that I dedicate this account of Slovakia.

The author, a middle-aged Britisher who has spent most of his life in traveling, is reputed to know more about Czecho-Slovakia than any living Englishman; so that when he deprecates his exaggerations and his lacunæ, one is hardly prepared for the entertaining and infinitely delicate nonsense out of which he has built his book—the gypsy who was his so charming companion on the road, the cuckolded grocer who shared his house with a huge wooden saint, the annoyed waiter who poured lentils down a customer's ear-trumpet, the buxom and voluble little chambermaid ("she is like a very solid paper weight, but she is joyous") who left her work to accompany him in his wanderings, and the rest of his jolly, impossible child-folk.

The title gives no clue to the book. It is not a travel book, unless "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" is also a travel book. Neither is it novel, nor essay, nor treatise. It is just a nice book. Its humor is the British humor of the Situation, and it is delicately, even when most indelicately, wrought.

> Then a motor car came down the road and behind it, for some reason or other, was a dog tied by a rope. He was a large animal, and clearly he was not distressed by having to go quickly. What distressed him, one could see from his harassed features, was the fact that multitudes of other dogs had loitered by the wayside trees or haply by the cornerstone of houses, whereas he was being forced to go without a tribute by.

It is hard to compel oneself to realize that this elfin and charming and quite unclassifiable little book is probably not very important, and so to refrain from writing at length, excitedly, about its odd and whimsical flavor.

The Russian Experiment

THE RED TRADE MENACE. By H. R. Knickerbocker. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company. 1931. $2.50.

THESE RUSSIANS. By William C. White. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1931. $3.

Reviewed by Henry Kittredge Norton

IT would be invidious in any reviewer to select one or two volumes from the stream of books now issuing from the presses on Russia and to pronounce them the best of the lot. The average is much higher than we have had heretofore and among them are many sound and scholarly analyses of various aspects of the Russian experiment. But these two volumes can hardly be eliminated from the list, however short, of those that any student of Russian affairs should read.

"The Red Trade Menace" is by no means an alarmist warning of the death and destruction which the Five Year Plan is going to bring to our capitalist economy. It is an excellent journalistic survey by a thoroughly competent observer of what is being done in Russia under this vast project. The author not only studied the Plan with the planners in Moscow, he traveled to one after another of the distant plants and saw for himself how the paper plans were being realized in timber, steel, and concrete.

Mr. Knickerbocker has a flair for wise and penetrating questions. Repeatedly he puts his finger on the vital spot in this or that project. His reports of his observations and conversations create the impression in the reader's mind that he himself has investigated the workings of the Plan and has satisfied himself as to the forces which are working for and against its success.

It is impossible within the limits of a review to refer to all of the matters which are so usefully clarified in this volume. Two or three, however, demand mention. We are indebted to the author for an unusually clear and succinct account of how the Five Year Plan came into existence in response to the need of the Bolshevik government to bring the vast peasant mass of Russia, 83 per cent of the population, into the Communist scheme of things. In order to speed up the economic development of the country and thus find work for the growing urban proletariat, it was necessary to have exportable surpluses. Grain was the traditional Russian export and the most likely medium for this purpose. Moscow tried sequestrating the surplus grain of the peasants and found that the next year there was no surplus to seize. It tried allowing the peasants to make a profit from their surplus and found it was fostering a class of "rich" peasants—the Kulaks—who would inevitably be opposed to the Communist order. The next course was the industrialization of agriculture under state direction and control. This involved the reorganization of the whole economic system of the country. The Five Year Plan was the result.

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Mr. Knickerbocker's discussion of the role played by the foreign engineers and technical experts is equally illuminating. Russian engineers might be just as competent, but they could not take risks. For if they failed, they would be accused of sabotage, tried for counter-revolutionary activities, and perchance shot. The foreign expert has a greater freedom to make mistakes and therefore to experiment toward finding more effective methods. This makes the foreigner doubly valuable to the Soviets. He supplements the inadequate Russian technically trained personnel and he serves as a buffer between communist doctrine and economic fact.

The author of this volume is too shrewd to hazard any broad generalizations as to the ultimate success or failure of the Five Year Plan. He contents himself with showing us how many parts of it are actually working out both in statistical and human terms. There are many elements of doubt in the statistics: there are still more in the human elements. The Russians are still Russians despite the strenuous efforts of Moscow to press them into new molds.

It is on this side of the matter that Mr. White's book is both fascinating and invaluable. Mr. White concerns himself little with the statistics and specifica-

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tions of the Five Year Plan. He is interested in the effects of the Russian revolution in all its aspects on the Russian individual. He spent some three years living with the people now in Moscow and now in the provinces. Each of his seventeen chapters is a skilfully painted portrait of a typical character in a typical setting. So adept is Mr. White in his portraiture that he fairly makes us acquainted with "these Russians." The slovenly and philosophical housewife, the despairful professor, the fanatical young woman in the university, the priest resigned to a life of dangerous uncertainty, the flapper stenographer and the even more colorful if less familiar peasants and villagers, become for us real persons as we listen to their rehearsal of their ambitions and their hopes, their trials and their hates.

This concentration upon individuals by no means ignores the revolution itself? It pervades the whole atmosphere. We get the Communist attitude toward the peasant in such a conversation as the following:

"How can we use machinery in a village now?" The government agent asks a rhetorical question. "Can you use a tractor on strips of land as small as these? You couldn't turn it around. At the bottom of our problem is the land-holding system. Not until we abolish these small fields can we make any progress in the village. Yet the tradition of 'my land' is firmly rooted in the peasantry. They don't see that their poverty is their own fault—that they can improve themselves. We'll make them! What good are modern industrial cities if our villages remain in the seventeenth century? Sometimes I like to think of the village of the future. . . ."

"Are you never discouraged?"

"Yes, when I think of the twenty-seven million peasant families in our land, just that many separate fortresses of tradition and ignorance united to hold us Communists back."

And the young soldier of the Red Army showed how he had absorbed the teachings of Moscow anent foreign lands:

"We are the only proletarian state and are hated in every land abroad," Alexander spoke with the deepest sincerity. "The capitalists could crush us by uniting in an economic blockade against us, but they will not do that, for they are too greedy for the profits they can make in business with the Soviet Union. They may pray for the end of the only country where their fellow men are not exploited in mines and factories, but"—a note of triumph crept into his voice —"after twelve years of continuous existence we have those capitalists at a great disadvantage. They know now that another war is the greatest menace to their continued class domination."

Alexander had never visited the mines in the Donetz basin, described by Mr. Knickerbocker. There are evidently ways and ways of "exploiting" one's fellow men. Despite the flood of light thrown on present day Russia by these two books the great question remains unanswered—will the Russians stand the strain placed upon them by their new masters in the name of progress?

Discursive Criticism

ENDING IN EARNEST. By Rebecca West. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1931.

Reviewed by H. C. Tracy

HERE is much the brighter side of criticism. Those who were led to expect something brilliant and formidable—or solely brilliant and entirely formidable—may be disappointed to find the author of "Ending in Earnest" so much at her ease. She is that. She is informal, all through the volume, and in some passages carries it almost to the point of being off her guard. But no one can better afford such informality. If Rebecca West were set down somewhere on the sands of the Sahara, with a dervish for company, she would create worthwhile criticism out of the episode. And this book is wholly and delightfully episodic. This characteristic, and the personal manner used here, are accounted for in a short foreword, but beyond the reason there given—that it was by arrangement with the editors for whom the articles were originally prepared—there remains the larger and more cogent reason that this is a manner in which she was destined to write. That she was writing for Americans, or for a particular periodical, had less to do with it than the obvious fact that she was writing for herself. This milder, brighter, more buoyant mode of expression was imperative for one who had said so many serious and controversial things about James, and Joyce, and other great lights who could not be put off with insouciance. Yet those who want to see stiff controversy will find it in the last chapter of the book, which does, literally, keep its title pledge of "Ending in Earnest."

For our part, we should be willing to see Miss West leave the field of controversy to those who are good at little but dialectic, and keep entirely in this pleasant vein, but not because we find it pleasant or doubt her ability to hold her own in any argument in the critical field. This particular volume will be remembered for its illumination, always casual, often poignant, of persons and things in letters and in art. It is full of happy irradiations of characters one would like to have known, and now cannot—some of them have gone within the year. Here, in these pages, one falls on vivid glimpses, startlingly intimate and revealing, of such persons. That last meeting with Elinor Wylie—an episode of the slightest substantiality—somehow leaves an unforgettable imprint on our mind; says more, conveys more, than a whole volume of uninspired biography might hope to impart. Others appear here, indelibly etched. It is a gift.

Aside from that mental clarity (and a verbal dexterity to match it) that gave Rebecca West her reputation as a critic, she has, one perceives a further advantage: her possession of a thoroughly responsive psychic instrument. She has been at the pains to *keep this instrument sensitively alive and individual*, in spite of all the strain and dissonance that is wearing her contemporaries down. And so, although she holds her place at her chosen salient and is among the attacking forces in this eternal struggle between the new and the old, she knows well how to find a coign with the sun on it and chat with her friends. She relaxes joyously and writes suavely; but may at any moment dip a venomous pen.

* * *

The papers in "Ending in Earnest" will appeal to an audience many times larger than that appealed to in "The Strange Necessity." They tell less of those terrifying currents, cross-currents, whirlpools that have beset the world of letters; more of men and women of letters themselves. They reveal much, but often by indirection, as when light is thrown on a national habit, a personal obsession, and the like. Now there is talk of French devotion to the spirit of art, and of a French public that will support its artists—once it has accepted them—even when they fail to grow greater with each production; as an English or an American public will not. Now we are at a rehearsal of a play, with consequent reflections on English attitudes toward post-war realism and its dramatization. Or, we are at a dinner party at which Mr. Max Beerbohm, looking like a porcelain dragon in *blanc de Chine*, discovers with surprise and distress that he has been lured to a gathering in which at least twenty "female novelists and poets" are present without meeting some of whom he cannot hope to escape. Again, we are at a meeting of the English committee on the Femina-Vie Heureuse prizes for imaginative literature. This occasion furnishes the excuse for an excellent appreciation of the work of Mr. H. M. Tomlinson, who is present to receive an award for his novel, "Gallions Reach." It also provides opportunity for a terse account of the reasons why the author of "The Prisoner of Zenda" (present as chairman of the meeting) occupies the position of honorable obscurity in which we find him today.

These are but a few among many instances where a person well known to us, but dimly known as to personal outline, steps for a moment into sharp focus, is realized with utter intimacy, and can never sink back into blur. That happens with Sir Edmund Gossse. It happens with Mr. D. H. Lawrence, who appears as a traveler; actually in a shabby hotel in Florence, but spiritually a man who is journeying "to get a certain Apocalyptic vision of mankind." This last episode is in "Elegy," the last chapter but one, in the book. Earlier in the volume a curious light has been thrown on Lawrence in connection with an exhibition of his paintings. Similarly one finds, scattered all through these pages, comments, vivid and intense perceptions, illuminating slant lights from some new angle, on most of the distinguished persons who write in England to day. As we read them it seems to us that their author, while she is in sympathy with young, rebellious, and intellectual England and can be arrogant with it, is free from its despairs and hates; can be fair with the old and discriminating with the new—which is more than many seem likely to do. She is detached; but her new book reveals all the current psychic tensions. More, it illuminates them.

In the last essay of all—the one which has already been referred to as controversial, and which is, for that reason, out of key with the other essays in this volume—Miss West takes her stand definitely against the Humanists, or rather against specific American, English, and French leaders who are the self-constituted spokesmen of a movement currently called by that name. Her criticism is apparently controlled and clear-sighted; but it is vitriolic, nevertheless, and will not especially assuage the feelings of one American editor and two American scholars whom she attacks. She makes her own position entirely clear —that is the chief merit of the paper—the tone of her attack makes one wish this particular chapter need not have been included in an otherwise charming as well as informing discussion of things pertaining to art. There is, further, this weakness in her charge against Professor Babbitt, that she has failed to perceive that his main contention, here described as a truism, has by no means reached the classes he aims to convert. In America we do not merely address our views to coteries and then consider our duty discharged. We continue to hammer them until we begin to see effects, and no such effects are visible here as are claimed for political movements abroad. We are incurably romantic even when we are loudest in proclaiming our adherence to standards. The American business mind knows but one kind of discipline, and that has nothing to do with the discipline advocated in "Democracy and Leadership." One must have lived some time in the United States to learn how far from being articulate are its mental, moral, and social codes. Just what literature may have to do with these codes is problematical, but the view that it has something to do with them is not wholly absurd.

The great merit, and enduring value of this collection of essays is not that it ends in earnest, but that it manages, before becoming so, to provide the greatest amount of illumination with the least amount of heat. It is for this that the book will be remembered, and it is to these chapters we shall oftenest recur.

The Great Methodist

JOHN WESLEY. By John D. Wade,. New York: Coward-McCann. 1930. $3.50.

Reviewed by Herbert Asbury

WHEN I say that this book is very disappointing, I do not mean to imply that it is not worth reading, for it is. It is by far the most readable of the many books about the Great Methodist which have flooded the bookshops within recent years. It is exquisitely written, and it contains the essential facts about Wesley's career, but it says nothing about the founder of Methodism that has not already been said a thousand times. Dr. Wade's researches have obviously been extensive, and his reading has been wide, but he has unearthed no new material; everything in his book is available to anyone who possesses the patience to pore over the pages of Tyerman and Southey and of the voluminous writings of Wesley himself.

The publishers "recommend this book without reservation as a thrilling introduction to a great man who has too long been known only as a statue." Well, they would, of course. For my part I can recommend it as a thrilling example of fine and graceful writing, so fine and graceful, in fact, that in reading it one forgets whom Dr. Wade is writing about; the author and not Wesley dominates the book, and one never becomes acquainted with the man who founded the most powerful Protestant sect in Christendom. Dr. Wade chose to cast his book into "a series of character sketches," but he was overwhelmed by the brilliance of his style, and he succeeded in writing, as one reviewer has already suggested, a series of exquisite prose poems of which Wesley chanced to be the subject. From that viewpoint, Dr. Wade's book is rather an extraordinary

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Henry Seidel Canby.....*Editor*
Amy Loveman.....*Managing Editor*
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Noble A. Cathcart.....*Publisher*

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performance. The reader who is in search of a solid, authentic biography of John Wesley will find nothing here to interest him, but the reader who enjoys beautiful writing, finely turned sentences and elegant phraseology, will obtain much pleasure from Dr. Wade's pages. The entire book is in tune with the opening paragraph:

Somehow, the Reverend Samuel Wesley had driven beyond safety the patience of his wife Susannah. Thirty-one years old, and married since she was nineteen, she had already given birth to fifteen children. Her patience was most likely ample, but Mr. Wesley was beyond doubt vexing. Whatever the nature of his offence on that particular morning, it was perhaps, with little relevancy that she chose to introduce the question of King William's right to the British throne. She had never believed that William was her true sovereign, but in view of her husband's passionate advocacy of him, and of mundane considerations in general, she had registered no formal protest. But this morning Mr. Wesley's conduct cried out for rebuke, and during the family prayers, when time came to make supplication in behalf of the King, Mrs. Wesley, for her part, saw to it that Amen stuck in her throat and did not out.

The "Oxford History"

THE GROWTH OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC. By SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON and HENRY STEELE COMMAGER. New York: Oxford University Press. 1930. $5.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

THIS volume represents a happy enterprise by an unusually happy partnership of scholars. It is now more than three years since Professor Morison published his two-volume "Oxford History of the United States," which was written primarily for Englishmen interested in American events, but which enjoyed a warm reception on this side of the water. The general impression was that a book so superlatively good in certain respects, and particularly in literary quality, deserved to be made a good deal better. In this large volume of almost 1,000 pages the "Oxford History" has been recast and rewritten, with additions and corrections. The task has brought to Mr. Morison's side a scholar of Middle Western origins, trained in the University of Chicago. The result of this union of New England and Western effort is the liveliest, the most polished, and one of the most stimulating of all the single-volume histories of the United States.

It is not difficult to indicate the ways in which the two authors have altered and improved upon Mr. Morison's original structure. "The Oxford History" is still worth reading for Mr. Morison's highly individual ideas, his skilful literary presentation, and his wealth of allusion and quotation; but it possessed three or four decided defects, which have now been remedied. One fault lay in its eccentric apportionment of space, for with the interests of his English audience in mind the author gave an excessive attention to the Civil War, and wholly slighted a number of important phases of American history, especially since the death of Lincoln. Another shortcoming was the condescension rather amusingly displayed toward the Middle West, and indeed toward every part of the United States very far removed from Boston and its cultural outposts. A third fault was the plethora of minor inaccuracies. It might be added that the price of the "Oxford History" was much more than ordinary students or readers could pay, and that its two volumes really contained no more material than is often bound in one.

We may assume that Mr. Commager has played the principal part in rectifying these faults and in adding greatly to the material upon recent American history. The proportions of the new work, while they will not please everyone, are on the whole excellent. The Civil War has been boiled down to eighty pages out of the 900, and the period since Appomattox receives one-third of the whole volume. The treatment of the Middle West recognizes its dominant role in American political life ever since the election of Lincoln, while the fact that the most important contributions to American letters and ideas in the last two generations have come from beyond the Alleghenies is brought out with satisfying emphasis. Indeed, the sectional fair-mindedness of the book, its willingness to see the Southern side of the slavery question and the Western side of the money question, for example—is one of its most commendable qualities. Not all the errors of the "Oxford History" have been hunted down, but they have been weeded out with a fairly efficient hand. In its treatment of social phases of our national record the book meets the latest requirements of teachers and of readers.

But to say this much is to leave the more individual and positive qualities of Mr. Morison's and Mr. Commager's work undefined. These qualities are neither few nor slight. The volume, of course, makes no pretensions to add anything to scholarly knowledge. It does not pretend to offer new points of view to any such extent as the several volumes of the Riverside History, nor does it emphasize general ideas in the way in which the Beards' "Rise of American Civilization" did. It is primarily a factual record, and it clings to conventional lines. But within the limits thus indicated it achieves a striking excellence. It is written, to begin with, in a style of sustained finish and grace. The descriptions are graphic, the characterizations have an incisive quality that recalls Goldwin Smith's short volume on American history, and the narrative is managed in a fashion that brings out the dramatic junctures and contrasts of American history. Effective use is made of snatches of quotation—now from a political speech, now from a novel or poem, now from a popular song; and in three instances out of four these quotations are unhackneyed. Finally, the volume shows genuine penetration. Without being preoccupied with ideas, it does not slight them, and the facts are seldom marshaled without an attempt to extricate their sub-surface significance.

Of course it is always possible to find faults in a one-volume history, no matter how good. Some will complain that even with 300 pages, the treatment of the long period since the Civil War is too crowded; that some of the judgments of men and events are not merely snappy but snap; that there are eccentricities in the use of space—Peggy Eaton receiving as much attention, for example, as all the events of Van Buren's administration. But when all is said, this may be pronounced the most entertaining, stimulating, and instructive single-volume history of the United States as yet written on the plane that meets a demand for all the principal facts as distinguished from the Beards' commentary on the facts. It's fine literary qualities should commend it to a wide body of general readers.

A Transcript from Life

WE TAKE TO BED. By MARSHALL MCCLINTOCK. New York: The Viking Press. 1931.

Reviewed by DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

A PAINFUL, heartbreaking book that ought to be widely read. It is good for human hearts to break rather more than they do, over other people's miseries.

At the beginning of this true story the McClintocks are an agreeable American couple, married very young, very much in love with each other, struggling hard and not unsuccessfully to make both ends meet in that zestful, laborious, slightly anxious period of early married life when the first baby is new and the salary hasn't been much raised. Sensitive, literary-minded, life-loving young folks, they are such as we all have in our family or circle of acquaintance, attractive, intelligent, not unusual.

On them in the very first pages, falls a blow which little by little as we read, throws about those pleasant, youthful figures a cloak of tragic greatness. Such a blow as might come to almost any of us, with the mixed inheritance we all have back of us. In the young wife's lungs is found a spot infected with tuberculosis germs.

As by an evil charm, their whole life down to the smallest detail is changed and darkened. We follow them to Saranac, live through with them the ups and downs of sanatorium life, mingle with the strange crowd brought together by this one thing in common, share with them their desperate efforts to find their way out from this nightmare back to the ordinary life we all have and take for granted. Efforts as futile as desperate. At the end of the book the young wife is worse, the baby's infection with tuberculosis is plain, and the young husband—who has already had one stroke from the claw of the same fate which hangs over his wife and baby—is at the end of his money.

It is only after we have emerged from the spell of the plainly, powerful written book, after we have had time to look at something else than those pitiful young figures caught in the sand-trap of disease, watching the walls of their prison slowly slide in on them, that we can remember other (presumably milder?) cases of tuberculosis which we have known. For we have all encountered less tragic stories than this, cases of infection which after a year or so of care and wise treatment have been quite simply cured. But because we are for the most part wilfully optimistic Americans we have allowed ourselves to think of such cases only when we think of tuberculosis. The McClintock book will give us a much needed scare and may diminish in us a little our national tendency to think that tigers and leopards need only to be patted on the head to become lap-dogs.

The Story of a Town

THE MAKING OF A LADY. By SARA HAARDT. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

SARA HAARDT has called her first novel "The Making of a Lady," but it is a place that she has created. Novelists of the local scene have frequently shown, with bitterness or amusement, the influence of the American town upon its inhabitants; Miss Haardt shows the influence of the inhabitants upon the town. It is the town that has the reader's sympathy, and it is the town that has actual character. These lovely, sweet-scented, tree-shadowed streets were surely never brought into being that the people of the story might saunter in slow happiness along their moonlit ways, or slip with furtive quickness from dark patch to dark patch avoiding man and moon alike. No, whatever her intent, Miss Haardt has brought to life in her book a Southern town that stays with one after the reading, while the characters are gone with the story. These seem made just so that some one should live in the gracious houses and dilapidated cabins that are so much more alive than they are.

The story opens with summer nights in Meridian, and in the first few pages both the manner and the charm of the book are established. There is the clash here that is to run throughout the novel. The people against the place. The almost palpable softness of the night under the dark arches of the magnolia trees with the earthy smell of late sprinkled lawns is shattered by the vulgarity of voices: "Say, Hanson, that was some little sweetie you had at the show last night" . . . "Now you're talkin', man, but I'll never tell"—with heavy guffaws from the men and squeals of shock from the women.

If one mentions first the beauty and romance of this South, it is not at all because Miss Haardt has overemphasized them. The sharp, the noisy, the industrial aspects of Meridian are hammered out with more than mere integrity. Miss Haardt has caught the tempo of the earlier machine age. A paragraph brings back the time when railway stations were ports of adventure, and individual trains were more than means of getting somewhere.

The windows of the cotton mills in Rails End blazed as if they were afire. Working overtime to fill the long lines of cars clattering over the tracks of the L. & N., the Central of Georgia, the M. & O., the Seaboard. . . . Down in the railroad yards everybody waited for No. 37, the epochal new through train on the Southern, the New York and New Orleans Limited: all-steel cars with sleek hooded roofs and sneaky wheels.

Only details are given yet the train is here,—is going. "Muffled voices . . . the mysterious flash of green and ruby lights . . . hot, penetrating smells of steam and soft coal . . . 'All aboard, all aboard!'"

It would be easy, and useless, to multiply these short, succinct descriptions that give, piecemeal, the whole of Meridian from the pretentiousness of Eden Park to the impressiveness of the Avenue.

Beulah Miller is the made lady. She begins as dangerously near a poor white trash baby. And she ends as a wife in the First Family of her town. She has flashes of striking reality; in certain scenes, certain relations, she is completely alive and dominating. But she is not a sustained character. She is not always even the same Beulah; there is a Beulah here and a Beulah there, but no one Beulah. The sympathy between her and her father is supposed to be of major importance in her life, and yet this father remains from first to last a wooden facsimile of his own type. The mother, a less important character, is like the father in her stiff delineation; they are both crossed to the last T and dotted to the last I but they never live.

Several minor characters and the negroes are, on the other hand, most convincing in their animation. And there are vibrant passages and scenes that show a sympathy and insight which augur well for Miss Haardt's later books. This one lacks, not continuity, but continuousness; there are gaps in the story and gaps in the characters. There are, however, no gaps in Meridian, the town.

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The Bowling Green

John Mistletoe, XXVIII.

IT was a wet night when I said goodbye to him; it was hard to let him go. I had known the worst of him, yet there was something there that might have been worth encouraging. It was raining heavily, so I did not long hear the going footsteps. I am glad it was raining, cold steady downpour, sweet to taste. It washes a Long Island dogwood tree, it washes the stone walls of Stratford church. It would soon sodden to pulp the pages of all these books. Wash out cheap ink and glue and leave bare feeling. I never knew about rain until that night. I saw the blowing storms of the world sweep into the dusty rooms of literature, whirling aside our little notes and memoranda, stripping us down to laughter, pity, and need.

Perhaps Mistletoe was reproachful, that last evening we spent together, because there is so much I have not mentioned. Once I came by chance on a 17-cent stamp and found it was a beautiful little engraving, in wistful black and gray, of Woodrow Wilson. I wondered what odd quirk of partisanship had tried to bury Wilson in so little-called-for a denomination. The tragic errors of temperament were plain enough, but who could question the lonely honor of the man. I can see him still as he sat in the house on S Street, one arm paralyzed, the other nervously plucking a handkerchief from his pocket. (It was strange that the man one associates with the end of the War, like that other at the beginning of it, lost the life of one arm.) I can see the almost youthful pinkness of the face, the clear solemn eyes enlarged by glasses, the unbelieved reality of his kindness in welcoming a young stranger who sitting in that room with him felt stir and turn about them all the horror of principalities and powers. I remember the detached bitterness of Wilson's words about the Peace. He spoke grimly, but it was from far away. It was finished. What is so bitter as the disillusionment of a sentimentalist?

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The Post Office tried to hide Woodrow Wilson on an obscure 17-cent stamp; likewise, Mistletoe may think, I have said nothing of so many things that meant most. As he went away the straight rain, sparkling in the street lights, swept and scoured the night. Just such solid rains in old nights on Iffley Road, over Magdalen Bridge, bells rolling in the dark. Queer flashes of memory must have come over him. Dinner in the Printkeeper's official residence at the British Museum— "The Monument" R. L. S. had called it—when Sir Sidney and Lady Colvin still lived there and that gracious host and great gentleman told actual anecdote of those who had been only hearsay names: Ruskin, Browning, Trelawny, Meredith, Stevenson, Hardy. As the wine was poured the boy remembered it was at that very table that the prudent Colvin warned the butler not to refill Stephen Phillips's glass too regularly. Colvin was always, as Stevenson used to say humorously, somewhat the Stern Parent. There were conscientious austerities, but the generosity and wisdom were just. Courier extraordinary between Bohemia and Pallas Athene. . . .

Going, in youthful simplicity, all the way down to the old *Sun* office on Park Row to ask for payment for a poem that paper had published; and learning that checks for such trivials were not made out until the end of the week; but the subway had taken his last nickel; he had to walk all the way back from the City Hall to 32nd Street. Naiver still, visiting the *Puck* office to try to sell a poem for cash down. Yes, comic. . . .

Driving the old Dodge car, Dame Quickly, in from Long Island: the first time one ever drove down Fifth Avenue in one's own car. Most would think nothing of it, but to him it was a Moment. Reading a Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard, for which he had to buy a cutaway coat and march in solemn top-hatted procession, while overseers and elders looked at him just as dubiously as the Barnum and Bailey elephants did when he played amateur clown in the circus. They knew by instinct he wasn't pukka Harvard. But he stayed with Professor George Herbert Palmer in the Yard, sat with the dear old man in his book-lined study a hot June night while the philosopher read poetry aloud—he can still hear his kind voice in William Watson's lines:—

> Strange the world about me lies,
> Never yet familiar grown;
> Still disturbs me with surprise,
> Haunts me like a face half known. . . .

The rose garden of an old house in the Cotswolds where, as a group of people sat sunning, a carrier pigeon with a ring on its leg came teetering among the domestic doves. It was plainly ill at ease, had somehow lost its way or failed of its errand. Its chance host, the great journalist Montague, stood patiently on the gravel trying to coax it to him. His fine white head, his austere weathered face, bent toward the anxious bird which wanted to approach yet spied him uncertainly. Carrier pigeons both, the watcher thought; birds of envoy, commissioned with urgent messages, a talent which is death to hide. . . .

When the children were very young, the intensity of silence in the nursery upstairs while a parent was pretending to telephone to Santa Claus; a creative studying silence that flowed down the steep little stair and sharpened the dull ear. Soon they are gone, almost lost already in their own beginning lives, their own assurances. (Must we lose *everything?* he thought to himself.) He sees them, appearing and vanishing among the edges of a thick forest, the brambly forest that youth pushes through before it reaches open upland—where sometimes it finds Santa Claus again, so strangely altered.

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Ironies absolute, but in that purge of rainfall not unbearable. (Perhaps it is the feel of wetness on the face that makes rain so full of humble meaning.) He went once to see a man he loved, one who had carried seas and symbols in his mind, a man who had also moved a whole world with one aching arm. To him that man was reverence. (If you don't worship men, what dare you worship? It is silly to think you can't recognize occasional error in your worshipfuls. Even the wine of the Communion Table is not notable for vintage.) He tried to tell the old Ulysses, as youth may without offence, that many of whose existence the great novelist might never dream were glad to know him on our own soil. The old man said simply "It helps me to hear that. It gives me something to stand on. I seemed to be losing touch with reality." Mistletoe, for I think the only time in his life, had taken with him a book he hoped there might be a chance to get autographed. He is not a collector, a distributor rather (though he did once hire a room for the sole purpose of collecting his thoughts). But this one time he wanted, if it became decently possible, to ask for a signature. Even then, in the moment of felicity, the radiant wing of irony brooded over its nursling. He was clearing his throat to venture the request when Ulysses began rummaging in a desk. He said to Mistletoe: "I know this is the sort of thing we don't do, but —is very fond of this little book and made me promise to ask you to sign it for her. Would you, as a special favor?" With gravity it was done; so infinitely unimportant a little book; and of course it was then and forever impossible to ask for the signature himself coveted. It would have seemed like suggesting an exchange. There is good theology in the tiny episode, otherwise it could not be mentioned. We may have imagined that if we met God we would ask Him for favors, but sometimes it is God who is asking them of us.

A night in the theatre. One of the best-loved members of the stock company had been taken ill at a rehearsal late that afternoon. No one supposed it serious, but Dennis was obviously too ill to go on. He was taken home, and Mistletoe, who happened to be fairly familiar with that script, volunteered to play the part that evening. Using his friend's clothes and make-up box, in the warm bright squalor of that shabby little dressing room, news came to him privately just before the curtain went up. His friend was dead. No one else was told until later. It was a heavy comedy part, and the obvious clumsiness of the tyro's attempts were good mirth for the company. "Won't Dennis have a good laugh about this" was the burden of their chaffing comment. None but the substitute himself knew that Dennis, who had played that role so beautifully with the shadow hanging over him, had taken his last call.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

The rain was slanting now; a wind was getting up, rocking the woodland. He remembered the sickening lift and shudder of *Mauretania's* bow where three college boys, deep down in unsavory steerage, lay on straw mattresses. They were on their way to spend Christmas vacation at home, Christmas 1912. It is always easy to discern an epoch from behind, but there *was* something about that year 1912. Mistletoe liked to imagine that by the chance of that rough voyage and some copies of his own little pamphlet hidden in a steamer trunk he had his minute movement in it. The Best Sellers of that autumn seem of another world altogether. Gene Stratton-Porter, Harold Bell Wright, F. Hopkinson Smith—but queer things were happening offstage. Vachel Lindsay had been peddling Rhymes To Be Traded for Bread. Don Marquis had just begun his Sun Dial column. Henry Mencken was writing a column in the Baltimore *Sun* and those gorgeous reviews in the *Smart Set.* Carl Sandburg was secretary to the Mayor of Milwaukee. John Kerfoot's crisp reviews in *Life* were those most highly esteemed by publishers. McFee came by freight-steamer to Wilmington, N. C., sitting in the saloon all the way over working on his endless MS of *Casuals.* Robert Frost had just sold his farm and gone to live in England. Noyes and Masefield were the reigning importations. The big bookstores were still Down Town. Lots of things seemed still Down Town, but a few zealots were moving out into less frequented suburbs of the mind. Reviewers were getting advance copies of *The Crock of Gold.* And on Christmas Eve 1912 Eugene O'Neill entered a sanitarium in Connecticut and "really thought about things for the first time."

Already how delightfully antique and arcadian all that seems. It always enchanted him to think how much a matter of fashion passing tastes of literature are, and how hot and unbuttoned the people get who are always trying to catch up. How far, far ahead Thoreau and Emily Dickinson got just by loitering in a pinewood or an Amherst garden. There was the fable of the Small Hairy Dog—

There was a small hairy dog that suffered greatly from heat. So much so that for his comfort his curators often put a small electric fan on the floor. This was highly relished by the small hairy dog, who sat as close to it as possible, turning himself leisurely this way and that to cool. He sat so close to the whirr, however, that when his custodians left the room they always turned off the current, for fear he might damage himself.

One very warm afternoon they left the dog indoors while they went abroad on some errands. The fan was on the floor as usual, but not running. While they were absent came one of those magically sudden changes of temperature that New York sometimes enjoys in summer. The wind shifted to the north, heavy torrid air blew away, a cool breeze came rippling in over window-sills, sweeping through the apartment. When they returned, the small hairy dog was sitting alongside the motionless fan, grinning and turning himself to and fro to enjoy the draught.

From time to time new winds will blow, but there will always be some people very like the small hairy dog. They will believe the fan is doing it.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

A boy once stayed in Devonshire in spring, when daisies almost as small as asterisks star the turf. He was on the top floor of the house, and setting out for the morning bath saw he was just too late. Looking down the stairs he saw a ripple of blue robe pass round the corner and the gleam of a white ankle. All hope, all dream, all reality, were in that instant flash of April girlhood that turned the shadowy corner. When he went to the bath a little later, on the cork mat was the perfect print of one small damp foot. He knelt and kissed the innocent vestige. Perhaps it was like him, perhaps it was like us all—kissing the footprint where life had been, missing life itself.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

A representative of the English press recently quoted Bernard Shaw, who had been asked for his opinion on the abolition of university representation, as follows:

"Not only do I approve of the disfranchisement of the universities, but of every person holding a university degree. Such persons should also, as in Russia, be disqualified for any kind of educational work and secluded from contact with the young, including their own children.—G. B. S."

"It is clear now that Mr. Shaw is not in favor of the university seats," says the *Manchester Guardian* in reporting the incident.

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BOOKS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Shakespeare and His Plays

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, A STUDY OF FACTS AND PROBLEMS. By E. K. CHAMBERS. 1930. Oxford University Press. 1930. 2 vols.

Reviewed by FELIX E. SCHELLING
University of Pennsylvania

IN these two fine volumes, Sir Edmund Chambers brings to completion a stately edifice, planned years ago in the vigor and expectation of youth, prosecuted with an assiduity extraordinary in any walk of scholarship, and crowned now with an enviable success. For this culminating study of the facts and problems which touch the biography and the dramatic activity of Shakespeare is based on the ample premises of two previous works of wider range, both long since accepted as authoritative, the author's two volumes on "The Mediæval Stage," and "The Elizabethan Stage." The writer thus achieves his avowed initial purpose "to write of Shakespeare, and of the English stage as the background of Shakespeare."

In the work under our attention he collects "the scanty biographical *data* from records and traditions . . . to submit them to the tests of a reasonable analysis"; and attempts "an evaluation of the results of biographical and historical study in relation to the canon of the plays," by this means to formulate "a considered opinion on the nature of the texts in which Shakespeare's work is preserved to us." The first volume presents this discussion; the second deals with the records on which the discussion is based, all set forth in scholarly fulness with a commentary necessary to the understanding of them. Illustrative maps and pictures are furnished where needful, and the apparatus of full bibliographies and indices completes a work as admirable for its method as for the lucidity of its argument and the judicial character of its conclusions. In a word, here is our Shakespeare, with the poverty of evidence concerning him and his work, the wealth of scholarship which has grown up about him, and the jungle of surmise and theory as well, submitted to an honest, an able, and a rational reappraisement on the basis of a deep appreciation and understanding of the dramatist's surroundings and the inheritances which were his from the past.

In view of the prevalence of imaginative biography among us, it is refreshing to find in this newest book about Shakespeare a stubborn skepticism as to much that is both ingenious and romantic in the life of the poet as only too commonly reconstructed. Sir Edmund rejects, for example, the whole myth of illiteracy not only for Shakespeare, but for his father and for Stratford. He does not think Aubrey's story that Shakespeare was "a schoolmaster in the country" wholly incredible, and agrees with those who believe that Johnson's ascription to Shakespeare of "small Latin and less Greek" is not a complete denial of his knowledge or even his reading in the classics. He even thinks that the poet might have acquired his Latin and his courtesy without service as a page in the household of a noble gentleman, as has recently been argued; and he refuses to be led off by "the dark lady" who has beguiled so many of Shakespeare's critics, by an identification of her naughtiness with that of Mistress May Fitton, who was not dark, or with Mistress Davenant, who, as the wife of a tavern-keeper, was not strictly "a lady," and as a faithful wife was not naughty. Here is a biographer of Shakespeare who recognizes —as some have not—that in a biographical and historical investigation we are constrained to deal with what time, often blind and negligent, has left us; that it is possible to weigh what we have in the scales of common sense, but that reconstruction and speculation on the perilous buttresses of idle tradition is generally worthless, and that not quite every question can be adjudicated with the certainty of a Q. E. D.

In the far more important parts of this work that follow, those that deal at close grips with the many knotty points that arise out of the texts and chronology of the plays, the range of Shakespeare's authorship and other like details, we have again and again from Sir Edmund that courageous agnosticism that faces at need a negative decision though it may lead—as it often must—to the standstill of doubt. There remains little space even so much as to touch on the many interesting matters which arise out of the discussion of these volumes. Important among them are the extended considerations of the problem of the authenticity of these plays, and the range of Shakespearean authorship, the chronology of the plays, the influence of the stage—perhaps even the personnel of the companies—on them, the handling of the manuscript in the printing house and many other interesting details, in all of which the author has utilized not only the evidences to be adduced but has given a meticulous attention at times to vagaries which a less patient scholar would dismiss in silence. As was to be expected, Sir Edmund takes vigorous issue with those who have sought to disintegrate Elizabethan dramatic authorship and out of the debris to reconstruct a species of coöperative theatrical mill, to which anyone might bring his grist, the baked loaf, such as a play that we now call Shakespeare's, turning out somehow haphazard in the process. Sir Edmund believes those plays, as they are the precious heritage of the English-speaking world, to be "the outcome of one man's critical reactions to life, which make the stuff of comedy, and of one man's emotional reactions to life, which make the stuff of tragedy": a refreshing if unorthodox opinion. A general vindication of the text of Shakespeare as to this and as to many other attacks which have been made upon it is not the least of the many services which this fearless reappraisement of Shakespeare scholarship has given us.

'Forty-Eighters

PILGRIMS OF '48. One Man's Part in the Austrian Revolution of 1848, and a Family Migration. By JOSEPHINE GOLDMARK. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1930.

Reviewed by OSCAR JASZI
Oberlin College

IN this attractive, lively, and interesting book the author, a daughter of Dr. Joseph Goldmark, a physician and chemist of renown in the Vienna of the '48 Revolution, and a niece of the famous composer, Carl Goldmark, gives far more than a family story, as is indicated by the subtitle. As a matter of fact she presents the most vivid picture yet drawn in English literature of the noble and idealistic generation which tried to uproot the petrified absolutism of Metternich, and, failing, fled before the victorious counter-revolution to seek shelter in foreign countries—many coming to America.

In the first part of the book we become acquainted with the whole social and intellectual atmosphere of the Viennese revolution. We see how the new forces of the Industrial Revolution were beginning to shake the foundations of the old régime both in the moral and the political field. Dr. Goldmark and his intimate friend, Dr. Adolf Fischhof, also a physician, and perhaps the most acute political mind of the whole generation, along with many other young scholars, abandoned the calm of their laboratories in order to participate in the great struggle for equality and freedom. It is remarkable to observe that the famous medical faculty of the University of Vienna and the Polytechnical Institute furnished many ardent fighters to the cause of the people, whereas the Law School remained a bulwark of conservatism and reaction. Strong Hungarian and Italian sympathies gave a broad international color to the movement, and there is a pathetic scene where the author describes how her father and his friends, facing the immediate danger of counter-revolution, waited, telescopes in hand, in the tower of the historic Cathedral of St. Stephen, for the approach of the revolutionary forces of Hungary under Louis Kossuth. But the liberator, driven back by the Imperial forces, did not come. Goldmark, falsely accused of the murder of Count Latour, the hated Minister of War (whom the people of Vienna had lynched), was obliged to flee, and after many wanderings finally arrived in America in 1850.

In the second part of her book Miss Goldmark tells the thrilling story of her mother's family, the Wehles. The life of the Jewish middle class of Prague at this time is described most interestingly through letters and other family documents. This curious mixture of the old-time Ghetto atmosphere with a genuine German culture and enthusiasm for the new liberty, gives her analysis a special charm.

The last part of the book is taken up with the emigration of the whole Wehle family, almost a patriarchal clan, and their difficulties and experiences in America. It is again a story of especial intimacy and flavor: how these well-to-do German-Jewish bourgeoisie, impregnated with various cultural influences (some of her ancestors were devoted to Jewish mysticism), found themselves lonely in the strange world of the Middle West settlers, how they resented the horrible table manners of their neighbors and the grave austerity of their Puritan lives; how they admired, at the same time, the deep democratic atmosphere of American life, its strong feeling of independence, its amazing self reliance and driving energy. Finally the forces of attraction exercised by the new American society proved stronger than the memory of comfortable bourgeois life in Vienna and Prague. Dr. Goldmark and the Wehles became loyal American citizens, and the vast chemical knowledge of the doctor was useful to the Union during the Civil War in designing and supplying war materials. And when, under changed conditions, at the beginning of the more liberal dualistic era in Austria, Dr. Goldmark paid a visit to Vienna, he remained unshaken in his loyalty to the United States; though he was received both in Vienna and Budapest with great honors, solemnly absolved from the charge of participation in the Latour murder, and received invitations from high quarters to remain in the country and devote his energy to the new constitutional government of Austria, he returned to America.

In this many-sided and romantic story, the author shows a perfect familiarity with all the literature pertinent to this period, and presents the most interesting documents and reminiscences of her own family which gave to America not only valuable citizens, but such an eminent figure as Judge Brandeis. Though the danger is very great in this type of personal recollection, Miss Goldmark never becomes loquacious or exaggerates the importance of the contributions of her own family. She always remains discreet, faithful to reality, and devoted to the best traditions of the 'Forty-eighters.

Why Rift Valleys?

LIVING AFRICA. A Geologist's Wanderings through the Rift Valleys. By BAILEY WILLIS. New York: Whittlesey House. 1930. $4.

Reviewed by C. BEVERLEY BENSON

MEN have long been puzzled by that long line of depressions in the earth's surface which extends from the Dead Sea across the trough of the Red Sea and, by way of the Nile Valley, across East-central Africa to Lake Nyasa. The southern end of these depressions, containing Lakes Nyasa, Tanganyika, and Victoria, on account of its great magnitude, has been of special interest not only to modern geologists but to stay-at-home explorers as well. Here lie the renowned "Rift Valleys"—so named because they lack the characteristics of valleys eroded by streams. Were they caused by a tearing apart of the earth's surface? Are they the result of some tremendous pressure which forced the sides of the valleys upward? Professor Willis went to study the matter for the Carnegie Institute of Washington and, preliminary to his technical report, has written a highly entertaining book for the armchair specialist.

Any book on Africa is notable that is not smothered by details of the domestic difficulties of safari. Professor Willis traveled six thousand miles by train, motor, boat, and on foot. Yet, except for its genial comments on man and his environment, the book keeps to the main point,—What caused the Rift Valleys? It charms one with the friendly intimacy of letters written home; it astonishes one with the clarity of its discussions of geological phenomena. The author sits down in spirit with the reader and argues the pros and cons of an explanation of a river flowing backwards, of a volcano out of place, and finally of the great rifts themselves. He tells his reader how to recognize ". . . . plains, hills, and valleys . . . warped or tilted into positions in which they could not have been formed." He thinks aloud in contemplating an exposed cliff:

> The rock . . . is cemented by a deposit of silica . . . which dissolves at high temperature and great pressure. . . . The conditions of temperature are not consistent with the . . . tension of Gregory's rift theory. The . . . rock, which is intimately crushed, bears witness rather to intense compression.

Are the rifts due to "keystones" fallen from a great arch which was pushed up by pressure from below? Professor Willis computes that such an arch would have had an elevation of twenty thousand feet. But where are the signs of the stream valleys that must have been cut in such a great uplift?

"Living Africa" suggests to the reader that the processes which caused the rift valleys are still going on, and that is the conclusion Professor Willis reaches.

Professor Willis's conclusions will make many geologists writhe. Isostatic balance and other modern theories are passed by as producing forces far too small to have affected such gigantic results. Yet the careful reasoning which leads up to the conclusions will carry many thoughtful readers along with it. If, as the author suggests, the same causes which produced the depths of the sea are at work in the rift valleys, future inhabitants of that region are in for an interesting time.

For those who like their geology undiluted with travel talk the author has provided an admirable prologue and epilogue; the former stating the problem and the theories advanced to solve it, and the latter the author's explanation and the reasons which lead to it. The reader will regret that the maps provided are so poor that it takes an expert to keep himself located as he reads.

Stage Memories

I'D LIKE TO DO IT AGAIN. By OWEN DAVIS. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1931. $3.

STAGE-STRUCK JOHN GOLDEN. By JOHN GOLDEN and VIOLA BROTHERS SHORE. New York: Samuel French. 1930.

Reviewed by WALTON LOSEY

MR. OWEN DAVIS in his reminiscences to date says, ". . . . I have never in my life wanted to do, and in truth I never have done, any of the practical, humdrum work of this extremely humdrum world, but have remained perfectly content to make faces at life and earn my living by drawing pictures on the wall." However, even Mr. Davis, playboy, is frank to admit that three hundred some odd plays and many more productions kept him pretty consistently busy; he is also frank to admit that his labors have not proved entirely impractical. We suspect that Mr. Davis is verily a worker in the theatre, but that he knows nothing of that greater labor which the theatre exacts of its artists, that uncompromising self-discipline of which the achievement may be called play. Mr. Davis has had a busy life and, no doubt, an entertaining one, scrawling pictures on the canvass walls of the big tent which is Broadway. It may amuse you for a few chapters to watch him at his scribbling.

John Golden seems to have more sense of humor about himself than has Owen Davis. Perhaps it is for that reason that Golden has occasionally been permitted to have an accidental value in the theatre, at least there was "Lightnin'." Certainly a less pretentious point of view is what saves his random autobiography from the shabbiness which thins Mr. Davis's pages.

Those who knew the heydey of the last quarter-century will find many evocative names and genial pictures in both of these books. Both books are amiable. But much of Mr. Davis's book is mere dithering, and Mr. Golden's book, like his act, eventually palls on the mind which is only mildly interested in the fact of Mr. Golden, stage-struck business man.

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Round about Parnassus

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE *Selected Poems* of Alice Meynell, with an introductory note by W. M., who is, of course, Wilfrid Meynell, are now given us by Scribners, following seven years after *The Poems* of Alice Meynell, Complete Edition, from the presses of the same firm. The one thing always apparent in the poetry of the late Mrs. Meynell was her distinguished diction. Her collected poems contained one hundred and twenty. This later selection holds about a third of that number. It is a most treasurable book, and we are glad that the first poem in it is the "Letter from a Girl to Her Old Age," one of the most utterly original and beautiful poems Mrs. Meynell ever wrote.

Suffer, O silent one, that I remind thee
Of the great hills that stormed the sky behind thee,
Of the wild winds of power that have resigned thee.

The book ends with that perfect lyric to her husband, "At Night," and we are glad to have affixed to the small rare volume some contemporary appreciations from great writers, headed by the late John Ruskin and including Coventry Patmore, William Sharp ("Fiona McLeod"), George Meredith, Francis Thompson, Sir Henry Newbolt, and Gilbert K. Chesterton. Dante Gabriel Rossetti called Alice Meynell's sonnet "Renouncement" "one of the three finest sonnets ever written by women." The poem "In Early Spring," which opened the *Collected Poems*, is also here again and deserves immortality, were it only for that marvelous line concerning "The cuckoo's fitful bell." Alice Meynell's was a "slender landscape and austere," but her religious poetry is fit to stand with Christina Rossetti's, and that is high praise. One pure lyric we are sorry to miss from this strict winnowing. It has always appealed to us as one of those seemingly effortless felicities that are pure song. We will quote it in full:

CHIMES
Brief, on a flying night,
From the shaken tower,
A flock of bells take flight
And go with the hour.

Like birds from the cote to the gales,
Abrupt—O hard:
A fleet of bells set sails,
And go to the dark.

Sudden the cold airs swing.
Alone, aloud,
A verse of bells takes wing
And flies with the cloud.

Sir Henry Newbolt has this to say concerning certain of her other work:

Mrs. Meynell's genius is sundered by leagues of tenderness and self-restraint from that of the fierce and gloomy Dean (Donne), but she seems to me to resemble him in her originality of metaphysical drama. Certainly there is no modern poem more original than the "Letter from a Girl to Her Own Old Age," none since Donne, which looks more profoundly or more sadly into the abysmal depths of personality.

And when we find a poem beginning, as in "A Song of Derivations,"

I come from nothing; but from where
Come the undying thoughts I bear?

we know we are in the presence of great verse; as also in "I Am the Way," which contains this perfect stanza:

I cannot see
I, child of process—if there lies
An end for me,
Full of repose, full of replies.

In her essays Mrs. Meynell had a touch that was often most near to poetry. One book of her essays that we possess, "The Children," is often of amazing insight concerning quite young people. The essay entitled "Under the Early Stars" holds in its first paragraph so delightful an observation concerning "a tide in the affairs of children" that we cannot resist quoting it here, to illustrate another than the devotional side of Mrs. Meynell which has been so stressed by the usual reviewer:

Summer dusk, especially, is the frolic moment for children, baffle them how you may. They may have been in a pottering mood all day, intent upon all kinds of close industries, breathing hard over choppings and poundings. But when late twilight comes, there comes also the punctual wildness. The children will run and pursue, and laugh for the mere movement—it does so jog their spirits.

The particular use of words in those sentences is like a conjuring. The young people are breathingly, and breathlessly, before one. And the observation is so wonderfully exact!

One gift of Mrs. Meynell's was a most exact observation of nature. If the general method of her verse was highly and finely traditional her descriptive terms were far more than "literary," they were those inevitably brought to her by a close contemplation with her eye on the object. She retained certain indirectnesses and inversions from an older day, a fine formality of statement which is alien to much modern verse, but so limpid is her expression, so pure her emotion, that these matters do not appear as blemishes upon her work, only like the accent of a distinctly individual voice, the voice of a singer born and an eclectic of the English tongue.

"*Vale and Other Poems*" comes from Macmillan and is a new volume from George Russell, the Irish poet "Æ." Some of these poems have appeared in another book of his we reviewed fairly recently. Some are new to us. Æ's poetry is full of the elemental things, earth and air and water and fire. Mixed with these is a strange brightness. In some respects he seems a latter-day Blake. His verse is supple and shining with a wild innocence. In such a poem as "Germinal" he seems almost to touch the mysterious secret of life and destiny:

To that first tapping at the invisible door
Fate answereth.
What shining image or voice, what sigh
Or honied breath,
Comes forth, shall be the master of life
Even to death.

And the poem ends:

Let thy young wanderer dream on:
Call him not home.
A door opens, a breath, a voice
From the ancient room,
Speaks to him now. Be it dark or bright
He is knit with his doom.

Most profound of all, however, seems to us the poem entitled "Retribution":

The soul into itself withdraws, thinking on all
The gay, heroical ardors it foresook; the years
That were made over sweet with passion; the tears
Love wept, dying of its own fullness; and the fall
Into the pit where seven unholy spirits conspire
Against the Holy Ones, turning the sky-born fire
Unto infernal uses, feeding beauty to the beast.
Remembering the dark joys that were born of the feast,
It dreads the everlasting fire, the torment of sense.
Oh, unhappy, the judge is not without thee but within,
Who shall condemn thee, as retribution for thy sin,
To the consuming fire of thine own penitence.

We have enjoyed running through a recent book from the Cambridge University Press entitled "*Eight Victorian Poets*," by F. L. Lucas. These talks, now gathered together in book-form, are chiefly delightful for the copious use of anecdote, some of it old and worn, some of it—to us at least—new. To quote a few situations which may be twice-told-tales to the reader or not, as luck will have it, Mr. Lucas refers to such incidents as Hardy on his death-bed being read 'The Listeners," by Walter de la Mare; Swinburne at Eton crowning with a jam-pot the maid who was reading to him aloud, the nervous laughter of Jane Faulkner when he proposed marriage to her, which inspired the cascading stanzas of "The Triumph of Time," and his addressing Emerson in a letter as "a hoary-headed and toothless baboon."

There is much tart discrimination in Mr. Lucas's comment, yet he is ready to praise and praises generously when he feels the writing to be worthy of it. His summaries of the poets he has chosen, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Clough, Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, and Hardy are just estimates, if far from being hero-worshipping ones. The endeavor is to see these geniuses steadily and see them whole, with all their shortcomings as well as their triumphs. They emerge as entirely human beings, which does not a whit affect the greatness of their great work. It is interesting, too, to see them in the not too generous asides of their contemporaries, who, it seems, could manage to say some pretty cutting things about even the greatest of them.

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Foreign Literature

Two German Plays

DAS REICH GOTTES IN BÖHMEN. By FRANZ WERFEL. Vienna: Paul Zsolnay. 1930.

ELISABETH VON ENGLAND. By FERDINAND BRUCKNER. Berlin. S. Fisher. 1930.

Reviewed by A. W. G. RANDALL

IT does not seem very long since the Prague writer Franz Werfel was one of the "young men" of the German stage. Yet here he is, with a mature piece of work, sure of himself, technically, philosophically. It is true that this latest historical play has some points of contact with his "Paulus under den Juden," which was produced about four years ago. Both are tragedies of frustration; both are personal dramas against a broad historical background. But the latest play is perhaps more self-confident. At all events it seems to us to prove that Werfel, after four or five years during which he has given us nothing but fiction, has done well to return to the dramatic form in which his first post-war successes were won.

In "Paulus unter den Juden" the desertion of the Jewish religion by Saul was paralleled, in the entry of the Temple by the Roman soldiery, with the defeat of all Jewish aspirations. In "Das Reich Gottes in Böhmen," similarly, personal defeat goes hand in hand with national humiliation. The scene is laid in Bohemia and in Basle, in the time of the great Hussite general, called Prokop the Great. The Council of Basle has been summoned, and the Papal Legate, Cardinal Cesarini, is on his way to it when he is intercepted by Hussite soldiers. He obtains, however, a safe-conduct signed by Prokop, and, under the name of Angelo and the disguise of a simple priest, is able to continue his journey. Meanwhile there is dissension, political and personal, in the Hussite ranks. One of the extreme, or Taborite, party, a certain Prschibik von Klenau, is in love with Prokop's wife Elisabeth. The great general had given her some ground for unfaithfulness, since, wedded only to the Hussite cause, he had neglected her, and had paid small regard to his family duties generally. For this Nemesis was to overtake him. Elisabeth runs off with Klenau, and Prokop's mother and sister are left in extreme want, so much so that in the terrible plague that follows in the wake of war, the younger woman is forced to a shameful life on the streets, and among the camp followers. This, and the infidelity of his wife, increases the discontent that was already being shown against Prokop, and all the smouldering intrigues and jealousies in the Hussite ranks break into flame. Something of the Hussite dissensions had already been shown to us in the impressive stage pictures of the Council of Basle, where, by means of a front and back stage, the dramatist had presented the deliberations of the ecclesiastics and politicians together with the more homely sides of the question—a technical method employed effectively several times in the course of the drama.

Prokop is defeated and at last comes to his death bed. There he is brought face to face once more with the simple "priest Angelo," the Cardinal Cesarini, whose dignified, understanding, and noble character had been well brought out in the earlier scenes. The two men meet not as enemies, but on a basis of common human sympathy. The churchman is anxious to hear Prokop's last confession, but the soldier is already delirious and fails to make it, while his poor blind mother, whom he had so much neglected, fails to recognize the body of her dead son. Thus the play, in which sordid tragedy and bloodshed had been relieved with some touches of humor, and certain political allusions which might be interpreted as topical—for the extreme Hussites were akin in many respects to present-day Communists—ends on a note of great personal pathos and pitiful frustration. The threads keeping it together may not be strong enough to ensure its success on the stage, but it is at least an excellent play to read, and in it Werfel reveals himself once more as one of the most important serious dramatists now writing in German.

Ferdinand Bruckner, one feels, is far from being as mature or as sure of himself as Werfel. His earlier plays were rather in the manner of Wedekind; they were an attempt to *épater le bourgeois*—and in this at least they succeeded. Here, too, in this latest play on an historical theme one can trace a deliberate effort to shock. If the dramatist has not read Lytton Strachey's "Elizabeth and Essex"—and he has had the opportunity, for that work appeared in German with the same publishers about a year ago—he has clearly gone to the same sources as the English writer, for in some of his physiological references to the "Virgin Queen"—one of his attempts to shock—as well as in his view of Bacon and the relations between the Queen and Essex he presents a close parallel with Strachey. One may, in fact, get a fair idea of the play by imagining a dramatization of some of Strachey's pages. The more original part of Bruckner's work consists in his parallel between Elizabeth and Philip of Spain. One or two scenes, by a stage arrangement the effectiveness of which it is difficult to realize, present the Queen with her council at one extreme of the stage, Philip with his advisers and his daughter at the other. The scene in which the King receives the news of the defeat of the Armada, and the thanksgiving service in St. Paul's, in London, are also presented simultaneously, and the singing of a Lutheran hymn and the monks' chanting—*die Stimmführung beider Chöre aufeinander kontrapunktiert*, as the writer's stage direction has it—are heard together. Altogether one would imagine these innovations rather difficult of accomplishment or, if accomplished, hardly worth the effort. Shakespeare could obtain the effect of simultaneity by means of a chorus, and by the power of language. But perhaps it would be fairer to withhold further questioning until the play has actually been seen. In the reading certainly the experiment looks interesting, and Bruckner is at least an enterprising young playwright with a promise. The chief distinction between him and Werfel—judged by their two historical plays—is that the older man has worked out a theme of personal and national tragedy, while the younger writer has constructed a series of pictures which do not give a regular view of the personal drama behind the defeat of the Essex rebellion, or the national drama behind the defeat of Philip of Spain. Bruckner, in other words, seems to us to have essayed a theme beyond his strength. His "Elisabeth von England" has more promise than performance.

Don Quixote with a Difference

LES FILLES DU DÉSIR. By FRANZ HELLENS. Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française. Paris: 1930.

Reviewed by BENJAMIN M. WOODBRIDGE

IN "Le Naïf," Franz Hellens evoked with a vividness that is unforgettable scenes in the life of a singularly imaginative and sensitive child brought up among the conventions of an austere Catholic family. Quite unaware of subconscious forces, Frederic is led by semi-innocent curiosity into many equivocal situations of which he barely senses the dangers. The cunning of the author lies in the sympathy, tempered by almost ironical detachment, with which he follows the reactions of his hero. "Les Filles du Désir" is the continuation. Le Naïf, whom we left on the threshold of emancipation, has deliberately resolved to tear asunder the shrouding veils. But sophistication does not come at the first beckoning. Frederic is a Don Quixote vowed to the service of the laughter-loving goddess who is in no haste to end his novitiate and her sport. A barmaid, a painter's model, a bohemian artist, finally a friend's sweetheart incarnate for fleeting instants his Dulcinea. His senses are aflame, but his timidity is an admirable guardian angel. Clearly the author's purpose is to follow the struggle between the two; he notes minutely the gradual victory of the senses and watches the curve of the first amours, in which imagination was the *protagonist*, as they crystallize into reality. His subtle diagnosis is never at fault, and his art of awakening in the reader long forgotten memories shows itself at its best. He is a psychiatrist of the first water.

"The French were, a generation ago, the most stay-at-home of all people," says a correspondent. "You find them nowadays on all the roads that lead back to Paris. *La Rive Gauche* has swarmed. Do not try to interest an up-to-date left-side young man if you have not been at least to Seattle or Baluchistan. Europe is too near, Europe has been annexed, as witness George Plazen's 'Europe Cynique, ou Les Aventures de Ferdinand.' Clever book, cleverly written, evidently by a young man in possession of old tricks. Voltaire's manner as a *conteur* is here resurrected. Do not, however, misunderstand the title. Do not translate by 'Cynical Europe.' Read rather: 'Europe, by a Cynic.' "

Not long ago Ernst Reinhold, a Vienna actor, recited the whole of "King Lear" by heart in front of the curtain of the Burg-theater stage, and, what is more, in the original English.

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The Reader's Guide

By MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER c/o *The Saturday Review*

P. D., San Diego, Cal., asks for books on map-collecting; especially interested in old decorative maps but would welcome suggestions on any branch of the subject.

"OLD MAPS AND THEIR MAKERS," by Louis A. Holman (Goodspeed, Boston, 1925), considers maps from the historical and decorative standpoints; he calls it a book with a "huge subject in small space," and it does get a great deal into fifty-two pages. Another is "Maps: Their History, Characteristics, and Uses," by Sir Herbert George Fordham (Cambridge University Press); this is a small handbook for teachers; from the same author and press comes another study in the history of cartography, "Some Notable Surveyors and Mapmakers of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eghteenth Centuries." I think the happiest map-hunters are those who hunt through open-air stalls abroad; it was in one that I found a Mercator map on whose cool outlines, framed beside my desk, I am wont to refresh a heated mind—a map of France in the days when D'Artignan was taking his journey through these towns to the northward to get the diamond studs, and when Charenton was away up the river from a "*tout petit Paris, madame, tout petit*" that the vendor pointed out with a brown finger and a sparkling eye.

I have a new-made American map, too, the latest revised edition of Dr. Paul Paine's "Map of Good Stories," whose droll captions indicate the scenes of well known novels in the United States. I remember that when the first edition came out, a modest single page affair, I took it along on a lecture tour and found it everywhere popular. The present version, a large sheet with many new titles and a key, costs a dollar for the map and fifteen cents for the key, from F. F. Gates, 602 Euclid Avenue, Syracuse, N. Y.

J. R. D., New York, asks in which volume by Gamaliel Bradford is his essay on Henry Adams. In "American Portraits," (Houghton Mifflin), along with Twain, Lanier, Whistler, Blaine, Cleveland, Henry James and Joseph Jefferson. *O. E. W., Gambier, O.*, thanking an unknown columnar friend for calling his attention to the Jebb translation of Sophocles, says that Chapman's "Two Greek Plays," about which I told him, "remind me of the tobacco and coffee from which the elements most essential to tobacco and coffee have been carefully removed. The law, however, requires that this outrage shall be acknowledged on the outside of the wrapper. But the reviser of the two plays omits whatever it pleases him to omit, and does what he pleases with what remains; and he labels the denatured result "The Philoctetes *of Sophocles* and the Medea *of Euripides*." *A. M. J., Boston*, adds to the list of books on Yucatan and Mexico "Children of the Cave," by Edward H. Thompson (Marshall Jones), saying "Mr. Thompson is, of course, one of the greatest authorities on Yucatan that there is. All the work now being done by the Carnegie Foundation is merely a continuation of his twenty-five years spent in that country, and is conducted from his estate." Marshall Jones will publish next fall an account of his life work under the title "Thompson of Yucatan."

R. S., Stanford University, Cal., is a recent convert to ghost stories, "proselytized and left to shift for myself in a veritable jungle." "You will remember the flavor of Montague Rhodes James's 'Ghost Stories of an Antiquary,' with its wealth of curious lore, ghostly and otherwise? Can you suggest a few tales in a similar vein?" No one else captures quite the rich flower of M. R. James: fortunately he has given us several volumes besides the "Ghost Stories," all of which may be obtained from Longmans, Green. There are "More Ghost Stories of an Antiquary," "A Warning to the Curious," and an especially elegant one called "A Thin Ghost and Others," the one with which I began. Longmans also publishes his "Old Testament Legends" and "The Five Jars," but these I have not read. You will find some excellent stories by contemporary writers in "The Ghost Book" (Scribner), one of the annual anthologies with which Lady Cynthia Asquith shows her skill in the selection of the unusual. Of these contemporaries, May Sinclair produces some of the most unpleasant ghosts I know; there is one in her "Uncanny Stories" (Macmillan) that curdles my blood. Algernon Blackwood cannot be beaten on elemental spirits; if I should ever go to the great north woods I would not be surprised to find tracks of "The Wendigo," that fearsome prehistoric creature, and his tale "The Willows" does something temporary to the breath. You will find unusual and affectionately treated ghosts in the works of Annie Trumbull Slosson, an American short story writer whose vogue was greatest at the time when dialect stories were sweeping the country: "A Speakin' Ghost" is in "Seven Dreamers" and "A Transient" in "Dumb Foxglove." Dorothy Scarborough has made an excellent collection of "Humorous Ghost Stories (Putnam) and another of "Famous Ghost Stories," and made a study of "The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction" (Putnam). Bohun Lynch edited "The Best Ghost Stories" (Burt), and J. L. French "Great Ghost Stories" (Dodd, Mead). Have you a little ghost in your home library? R. S. might like to adopt it.

I have been waiting for someone to spot my statement that Schumann wrote "Der Doppelgänger," but apparently my readers are all as magnanimous as the gentleman at the information desk of the New York Public Library, who when I told him I had just noticed a howler in my column and asked him if he knew what it was, replied "It was the one about Schubert, but of course I knew you knew that." It was this same omniscient one who reminded me of an important omission in the doctors' list: Haubert's "Madame Bovary."

E. K. G., Cambridge, Mass., has reached "the sad conclusion that Americans write only about their travels in foreign countries." He has been trying to find a lively, well-written, and informative book with the experiences of one who has gone by motor from east to west across the United States, for a gift to a University student from abroad who plans to use next summer in a cross-continent trip in a Ford.

THE latest of these—they are not many—is "Coast to Coast by Motor," by Paul E. Vernon (Rudge), who has written other books on motor travel; this is up to date and informative. In 1927, not too long ago to be useful, appeared F. F. Van de Water's amusing and practical record, "The Family Flivvers to Frisco" (Appleton), which seems in this case clearly indicated. Not long before that Nina Wilcox Putnam's "West Broadway," now published by Burt, described a transcontinental motor trip so amusingly that its title at once came to my mind. Mary C. Bedell's "Modern Gypsies" (Brentano, 1924) describes a twelve-thousand-mile camping tour encircling the United States; in the same year Winifred Dixon's spirited "Westward Hoboes" (Scribner) showed two girls in some etxensive frontier motoring. If you are taking along a tent there are several handbooks not in story form: "Motor Camping on Western Trails," by Melville Ferguson (Century); "Motor Camping," by J. C. Long (Dodd, Mead); "Motor Camping Book," by Elon Jessup (Putnam); and two by F. E. Brimmer, "Motor Campcraft" (Macmillan) and "Autocamping" (Appleton).

"A unique incident in the history of the Swedish Parliament occurred the other day," says the *Manchester Guardian*, "when Mr. Ture Nerman, a well-known young poet, and one of the few Communists in the Riksdag, delivered his maiden speech in elegant hexameters, but spoke them with such ease and naturalness that only a few of his hearers realized that he was speaking in verse. Next day, however, several papers printed this communistic declaration of rights in full, and readers realized that the speech was a regular poem.

"As a Communist declaration the speech was rather mild; one would prefer to call it a declaration of humanitarian principles. The paper of his own party took care not to mention that the poet rather than the politician had spoken, and that it could be read as hexameters, which might have aroused the wrath of his followers, since Mr. Nerman had spoken according to fixed poetic rules and not in 'free verse.'

"Next day some of the papers examined other speeches by prominent party politicians, and the strange fact appeared that several of the speakers had unconsciously spoken in 'poetry' instead of in prose. Thus, for instance, a farmer had used blank verse in his peroration, another M. P. had found the Finnish Kalevala metre come natural. The reason must be, as one paper suggested, that Swedish as a language is very rhythmical and musical, nearly all nouns and verbs being bisyllabic."

Clare Leighton, who has been spending the winter in this country, where a traveling exhibition of her wood-cuts has been held, was awarded the first prize at the recent International Engraving Exhibition at Chicago. Seventeen hundred prints from all parts of the world were on view. Miss Leighton published a book of her wood-cuts in the autumn.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Fiction

PROVOCATEUR. By ROMAN GUL. Harcourt, Brace. 1931. $2.50.

Azef, the notorious Russian agent-provocateur, who flourished in the days of the Russian Terrorists and sold himself to both sides, was one of those underworld figures, which, because of the mystery which surrounds them and the utter baseness they seem to reveal in such glimpses of them as the public is able to catch, become almost mythical. Azef was quite a flesh-and-blood individual, nevertheless, and he died peacefully in Berlin in 1919. All the other principal characters of Roman Gul's narrative—Savinkov, who died tragically in his own Russia, after he had voluntarily given himself up to the Bolsheviks, Breshkovskaya, and the rest—were similarly concrete and well-known.

The book itself is neither history, novel, nor straight journalism, but a curious hybrid, in which the known facts and such embroidery and atmosphere as the author chooses to add, are "novelized" into something suggesting the semi-fictional reconstruction of famous murder stories. The chief interest which the narrative has for the uninitiated reader is precisely that of such reconstructed murder stories — the slightly morbid curiosity of following the various preliminaries through to the killing which awaits at the end of the road. For Russians, for whom Azef's exploits were once as fertile material for gossip as Al Capone's are for us—if, objectively, more horrible — this story of the agent-provocateur and the Terrorists with whom he plotted, will have, of course, a wider and more complex interest.

It is nothing wonderful, at best, and its undistinguished matter is not improved by being chopped up into innumerable, numbered, brief paragraphs. Those with an appetite for murder and detective stories will find some novelty here, nevertheless.

OCCUPIED TERRITORY. By ALICE RITCHIE. Harcourt, Brace. 1931. $2.

With a war title and her pages strewn with hard-boiled officers, Miss Ritchie has written a thoroughly feminine novel. Action is reduced to a minimum, psychological processes are completely gone into, and we are left behind the curtain, quite unable to see the drama.

"Occupied Territory" is the study of a young girl in love for the first time—fresh from a convent, devoid of any philosophy of life, inarticulate, unmannered. Not a concession is made to public preferences. The girl, though young, is not attractive enough to cause the slightest stir in a town full of men. The one love scene consists of a mere touch of the hands. The other characters, reacting to the heroine's obvious experience, wander into long, unimaginative reflections. Certainly the novel would be more dramatic if only some of the figures might be seen objectively. There could be color. There is opportunity for sharp contrasts between the delicate freshness of the girl and the satiated dulness of the men. But any pattern of light and shadow, is sacrificed for the even monotonous grey. The story is realistic. No doubt it is true. There are bits—especially about the girl's father—that are quite beautiful. But the method seems for the most part to be unfitted to the material. The characters are too commonplace to warrant such tender handling. Gentle nuances just don't fit in "Occupied Territory."

MY HUSBAND'S FRIENDS. By KATHERINE BELLAMANN. Century. 1931. $2.

A book reflecting one personality—a world seen dimly through clouded eyes—a sad book. It is the reflections of a scientist's wife upon her own married life, the events of which are scarcely alluded to, but her reactions to them revealed with the thoroughness of the confessional. Smoothly one passes over twenty years or so—life in the south, years in Europe, the war, apartment life in New York, final sinking down as into a nest in a fine old mansion on the Hudson. A few details give one vaguely the feel of each environment. But none stands out distinctly. Other personalities spread great ominous wings, but only their shadows darkening this woman's hopes of peace are visible to the reader. Even the husband is seen from afar. The brooding, silent wife is interested only in clearing a way through the fogs of her emotions toward some kind of contentment. Whether she really reaches it, one can't be quite sure. In the beautifully written opening passage she gives a picture of herself that is delightful—alert, understanding, worldly wise. But immersed in her moods as the story moves on, one wonders if that first bright personality isn't after all the woman she'd like to be, and if the gloomy, Gaelic creature with abysses always yawning before her, isn't really the more accurate picture. In either case, the book remains a beautifully done portrait (conscious or not) of one of those tumultuous souls that is bound through its own demands to live apart.

STRICTLY PRIVATE. By THERESA BENSON. Dodd, Mead. 1931. $2.

"Cute, this would probably be called," is the comment on this novel by the observer who sends out correspondingly terse judgments of books from a jobber to the "trade." A lighthearted detective story of out-of-date pattern, with a coincidence in every chapter, stock butlers, maids, and chaperoned young ladies, plenty of baby talk, and no rhyme or reason. The background is wealth in the 1900's, when autos were new and dusters and veils a good disguise, when second story men were rampant and society dandies the pride of their tailors—an interesting background so unconsciously taken for granted and so totally unnecessary as a part of the story itself, that it strengthens the impression one has throughout that the novel itself is of the same vintage. But in spite of all its discrepancies and distortions of life and facts, there is a "come on" quality that keeps one reading. It may be old-fashioned, but it is good-natured and buoyant.

BIG MONEY. By P. G. WODEHOUSE. Doubleday, Doran. 1930. $2.

The Wodehouse fund of humor runs low in his latest novel, a tale which bears little semblance to those which have gained the author his popularity and high repute as a master comic-fictionist. Two young London toffs, one the impoverished son of a bankrupt earl, the other, also gently born, secretary to an eccentric American millionaire, combine their limited wits to seek through matrimonial and financial enterprise improvement in their worldly fortunes. These endeavors, though in part successful, do not alter the lads' penurious circumstances until a kindly stroke of fate gives into the hands of one the means of acquiring sudden, easy, untold wealth. The farcical dilemmas and misadventures survived by the two heroes abound in stale slapstick lines and obsolete devices of burlesque. It is true the story never falls to sleep, and something lively is kept going on continually, but the quality of entertainment is infinitely inferior to the kind which Wodehouse enthusiasts are accustomed to from the creator of the irresistible Jeeves.

THE CROCHET WOMAN. By RUTH MANNING-SANDERS. Coward-McCann. 1930. $2.

This is a most unusual book, set somewhere near the meeting place of the three countries England, Britain, and Elfland. It is in Cornwall, for a guess, though the book does not particularize, and it may be on the Welsh Marches; certainly it is somewhere where the Celtic mists still hang about the English moors. The book is full of witchcraft, or at least of the belief in witchcraft; the Crochet Woman herself is a bitter old hag feared by everyone as a witch, but you may believe if you please that the harm she does is accomplished not by the eternal crochet-work in which, like Lachesis or Verdanda come down in the world, she tangles the threads of her enemies, but by her venomous slanders. The heroine's baby is changed for a pixy, she thinks, but perhaps she was wrong, perhaps he grew thin only because she was at first a lovely sloven and did not know how to care for him.

Nevertheless, when you have explained everything in the book, you are still not in the world of everyday. The country folk, in the turns of their speech and the simplicity of their hearts, are like no people one has met on earth; they are like nothing but the country people in Mr. T. F. Powys's "Kindness in a Corner." There is in the whole book an atmosphere, not exactly of unreality—there is too much solid comfort, good food, and featherbeds, candlelight, and cream, for that—but of a world that is not ours. The flavor of the book is bittersweet and a little strange to the palate, like that of crabapples growing half wild. Much more than of most books, it is hard to say of this whether any given person, whose taste one knows well, will like it; but there are sure to be some who will like it extremely.

(Continued on next page)

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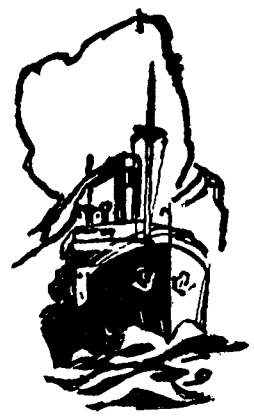

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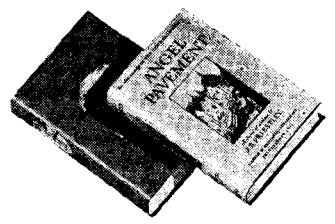
Each  $3.00

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COLLECTING AMERICAN FIRST EDITIONS. By RICHARD CURLE. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1930.

MR. RICHARD CURLE who has, during the past few years, written several interesting articles about book collecting in general, has now turned his attention to American authors of what he calls "the classic period" (the nineteenth century), and has produced a volume that, in spite of its subject and its illustrations—which are excellent—is singularly difficult and irritating. There is, at the present time, a group of persons who appear to confuse proofreading with bibliography; who with an enthusiasm that might better be devoted to other matters, collect typographical errors as if they were automobile license plates. To them, an inverted comma or a misprint in a running title is a "point" that may be used to prove everything: they divide printings and editions into a bewildering number of what they call issues, and without bothering to define terms, or to investigate the problems of publishing history, they go on to evolve a complicated system of bibliography that merely suggests a madman's puzzle. It is true that authors have occasionally discovered mistakes in their books which they have insisted upon correcting before the books were offered to the public—it is equally true, at the same time, that printers are often careless, and that much may happen to any given letter or numeral while the printing of a thousand copies of any book is in progress. It seems, therefore, rather absurd to argue, that because one volume has a broken letter on page 85, while another, exactly like it in all other respects, has a perfect form of the same letter on the same page, that the second is an earlier "issue" than the first—only overenthusiastic collectors would want to make such fine distinctions. And after all, it is quite as legitimate to believe that the thousand copies were all printed at the same time, as it is to believe that, after doing ten or fifteen, some wicked typesetter, with a kind of prophetic knowledge of future American book collectors, deliberately held up the presses and altered a few words in order to create a new issue for the benefit of posterity. Mr. Curle, unfortunately, has come under the influence of this typographical-error school; his purpose, as he writes in his preface, is "to encourage collecting," but as he has done as much as possible to point out the complications inherent in the works of such New England poets as Longfellow, Whittier, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, there is little hope of his success. And when, in addition to scattered details of variant texts, misprints, and green-gray, crimson, and chocolate cloth bindings, he pauses to give solemn warnings about faked first editions, the beginner may with great sense give up—it is doubtful if even a sentimental interest in "Thanatopsis" and "The Barefoot Boy" will be sufficient to involve him in the hard labor of discovering perfect copies, with all the points Mr. Curle says he must look for, of first editions of these gems.

In spite of his acceptance of dubious theories, and his hearty manner of writing which is particularly unfortunate, Mr. Curle has given collectors of nineteenth century American authors a work that they cannot overlook. It is, in many respects, the only serious study of the period that has been attempted aside from bibliographies of individuals and various check lists, and since it contains information not available elsewhere, it demands attention. There are annoying passages—occasionally extending over several pages—in which Mr. Curle dreams among his books; and there are discussions of issues that leave the reader rather bored; but at least an effort has been made to introduce some sort of order into the confusion that surrounds the best known volumes in American literature. And until some one with the patience and the ability of Mr. Michael Sadleir studies thoroughly publishers' methods in this country up to about 1890, it will be necessary to accept the majority of Mr. Curle's statements: he has contributed something to the subject, and has shown with great clearness its possibilities. If he had actually written the elementary kind of thing he intended, or if he had confined himself to a few authors, or to certain definite books, he would have produced a far more authoritative and informing work; as his book now stands, it is on the border line between real significance and popular appeal—it possesses qualities of both without ever indicating which is to predominate. It should be added that the number of typographical mistakes in the actual printing of "Collecting American First Editions" is rather surprisingly large.

G. M. T.

Auction Sales Calendar

Chicago Book and Art Auctions, Chicago. February 19: Americana, First Editions, Fine Bindings, Autograph Letters; also the H. G. Wells collection formed by the late F. A. Chappell. A respectable, although not especially unusual, gathering of books: the H. G. Wells items are almost entirely American editions.

American Art Association-Anderson Galleries. February 26th and 27th: Selections from the library of John P. Kane, of Locust Valley, L. I., and from the library of a private collector in New Jersey. The Kane books include the Kern copy of Beaumont and Fletcher's "Comedies"; Washington Irving's "Life of Columbus," with the author's manuscript revisions, the original printer's copy for the revised edition of the work, with whole chapters rewritten and many corrections; the original exercise book written entirely in the hand of George IV of England when he was a school boy; extra-illustrated *Sporting Magazine*, 1792-1870; and Apperley's "Life of a Sportsman." The books from the library of the New Jersey collector include Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer"; Bryant's "Poems," 1841; several first editions of James Fenimore Cooper's novels, including "The Last of the Mohicans"; Bret Harte's "Luck of Roaring Camp," and "The Heathen Chinee"; Several Hawthorne books; a presentation copy of Thoreau's "Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers"; a presentation copy of the first edition of Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health"; Hardy's "A Pair of Blue Eyes," with the agreement about the copyright, signed by Hardy, laid in; first editions of Balzac's "Le Peau de Chagrin," Flaubert's "Madame Bovary," Gautier's "Mademoiselle de Maupin," and Paul Verlaine's "Sagesse"; several autograph letters from Conrad, Hudson, Kipling, Stevenson, and others; and a copy, in the original boards, of Henry Fielding's "Tom Jones."

Sotheby and Company, London. March 2nd-4th, inclusive: Printed Books, and a few Manuscripts, including a collection of Bibliographical Works, the property of various owners. Sales of this kind are interesting if one has time to read the catalogues carefully: there is no general alphabetical arrangement, and books are often grouped in a curious manner. The bibliographical collection is by far the most important part of the sale.

G. M. T.

Answers to Correspondents

A. G. O'H., New York City.—Query as to the value of the Vale Press "Poems of John Keats," 2 vols., London, 1898. Vellum copy, bound by Riviere.

The value of this edition has in general been established by auction sales. Consult "Book Prices Current," a record of auction sales, in any large library. To establish the present value if sold privately, consult some recognized dealer in books in New York City.

M. E. S., Temple, Pa.—Query as to the value of "Reynard the Fox," after the German version, by Thomas James Arnold. Stuttgart.

See answer to above query.

The firm of Sotheran, the "Dickens number" of whose Price Current of Literature, No. 822, just issued, contains such a great variety of Dickens items, may justly claim to have a very old association with the author of "David Copperfield." In 1878 the firm purchased the entire library of Charles Dickens "as existing at his decease."

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QUARTO CLUB PAPERS, 1928-1929. Printed for the Members by WILLIAM EDWIN, at Mount Vernon, N. Y.

IT is with a constantly growing sense of relief that one reads these essays, written for and by the members of the Quarto Club: here are several gentlemen who apparently can write on subjects relating to book collecting without discussing prices, and who, at the same time, give the impression of knowing their books and authors. There have been few attempts before to do this kind of thing: collecting has either inspired technical works of the highest excellence, or gossipy volumes that, without the honesty and frankness of dealers' catalogues, have tried to conceal market values beneath an endless amount of personal experience in the discovery of bargains. There has been too much feverish search for required points, for original cloth, or genuine boards uncut, with no indication that anyone ever sits quietly at home and reads any of his perfect copies for enjoyment. Persons who accept advertisements for a knowledge of "Pickwick," or a form of the verb "to give" for an intimacy with Boswell, can scarcely be expected to have an urgent desire to get beyond externals.

The present Quarto Club papers are most delightful—bindings are passed by, and formal bibliography is gracefully disregarded. Mr. Maxwell Steinhardt writes about George Gissing and his "Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft"; Mr. Elmer Adler describes his adventures in making his superb collection of Mary Jemison; Mr. Amos Steinhardt contributes an amusing paper called "30 Erewhon Square"; Mr. Ralph Samuel gives a great deal of information about Gilbert A'Becket (one of the founders of Punch); Mr. Samuel Lowenstein discusses Charles M. Doughty and the "Travels in Arabia Deserta" with authority and distinction; Mr. Mark Holstein takes up famous books that have been written while their authors were in prison; and Mr. Victor Riesenfeld writes about Louis Becke, one of the early South Sea novelists. All these essays are excellent: Mr. Adler's, for example, might well be studied for its careful easiness of manner, and its way of including bibliographical details naturally in the main course of the narrative. There is great pleasure and satisfaction in finding a group of collectors who are willing to write for publication on subjects that attract them with so much ability and discernment. G. M. T.

The hand-lists of the Rosenbach Company's two exhibitions — "Monuments of Printing 1455-1500," and "Illuminated Manuscripts, Authors' Manuscripts, and Rare Books"—are extremely interesting and well done. There is nothing to be gained by listing the rarer items—everything is unusual in some degree, and ought to be seen, if it is possible. Copies of these catalogues can probably be obtained by writing the Rosenbach Company at 1320, Walnut Street, Philadelphia—at least, they make excellent reading and they deserve to be kept for reference. G. M. T.

"Colophon," writing to *John o' London's Weekly*, says: "Every year the University of Liverpool offers a prize in memory of Mrs. Hemans, who died in 1835 at the age of forty-one. Not much of her poetry, I am afraid, is in tune with the spirit of today, although Shelley and others of her generation seem to have thought something of it. As a rule it has neither depth nor subtlety; as Scott said, it has 'too many flowers for the fruit.' But some of her shorter lyrics are both graceful and tender, and as one who was brought up on 'Casabianca,' 'The Stately Homes of England,' and 'The Voice of Spring,' I cannot but feel a sentimental stirring of the memory at this perpetuation of her name."

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"The news produced on me an effect that was almost paroxysmic. I took a short walk in the park surrounding my house and returned in a condition almost of hallucination. I took a sheet of paper and began to sketch out this novel, of which, a few minutes previous, I had not the faintest conception. In one corner I jotted down two or three lines summarizing the theme of the book. Throughout its composition I never departed from these original plans."

Just published (appropriately enough, on the nineteenth) is *The Cross Word Puzzle Book Series 19*. *The Inner Sanctum* has been neglecting mention of these perennials of late.

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BUSINESS BOURSE
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ATTRACTED by a remark that *Frances Noyes Hart* seems to have made, we picked up *Joanna Cannan's* novel "No Walls of Jasper" the other morning at the incredible hour of two o'clock. We had gone to bed early and woke suddenly at that time. We never can get to sleep again immediately, so we dipped into "No Walls of Jasper." When we finally looked up from the book, having read it completely through, the gray dawn was in the room, stalking us from the open window. So we have decided that this novel must be readable. . . .

"No Walls of Jasper" is a most original murder story. There is no mystery, there is just inevitable retribution worked out in a new way. There is also a remarkable honesty in the portrayal of a villain who has certain rather fine characteristics among his other ones, and of a set of characters all of whom are intensely human. The novel is unsentimentally written, the characters are most English, one is not spared the drabness of life; and if you boggle at any of those things all we can say is that the workmanship is so clean and neat, to our mind, that it is impossible not to read it through at a sitting. It is not a great book at all, but it is a thoroughly good job. . . .

The other day we ran through the first instalment of *Grace Hegger Lewis's* "Half a Loaf," now appearing serially in *The Delineator*. The early romance of an American novelist who has recently received the Nobel prize is distinctly discernible in its pages. We could even name the building in which is the freight elevator in which the novelist and his first wife originally met. Mrs. Lewis's story is not notable for style, but she succeeds in giving quite a charming picture of the novelist in his salad days. We happen to have a good many memories of our own of him in those piping times, and while certain details are naturally changed for the purposes of fiction, the playful side of the novelist is pretty accurately drawn. To be sure there were other facets, some of which struck forth fiery sparks. It was the combination of the fieriness with the whimsicality (though we don't much like that word) that endeared the young blade to his friends. What an enormously good time he had, how perfectly ravenous he was for life. Those were the days before the war and the days before there was any "cactus land," to use *T. S. Eliot's* expression. There were plenty of battles to be fought, and the river was always to be set on fire. Thinking back on it, some day we shall write our memoirs. But we're going to wait till we're sixty, if then; and by then we shall probably be quietly dead. . . .

"Dr. Thorndyke's Cases," by *R. Austin Freeman*, are out through Dodd, Mead, just in case you didn't know. Dr. Thorndyke, as you do probably know by now, is one of our very favorite detectives. . . .

Recently we attended a party given for *Mildred Gilman*, whose new novel, "Sob Sister" (Cape & Smith), is founded on her experiences in the city room—and out of it on assignment—of a large New York newspaper. Certainly no woman journalist is better qualified to write the story of one who was constantly sent galloping off to scenes of battle, murder, and sudden death than Mildred Gilman. She has had all the experience. And now she has emerged from it and lives quietly in the country, bringing up her small son, and glad of the peace and quiet. So far as we could see, the hard-working years on assignment had dimmed not at all her blonde prettiness. And she was gaiety personified. . . .

We recently went to Atlantic City and out on the Steel Pier we saw an embalmed whale. It was in a glass case. We walked around and around it. We even saw the inside of its mouth, and now we don't believe that story about Jonah at all. He could never have got past all that whalebone without being badly injured. Also this seventy-ton whale had a harpoon still sticking in it. We think that was adding insult to injury. It didn't look to us as though that harpoon could really have deterred it for more than an instant. It wasn't big enough. . . .

As we write this we are thinking of going to another party tonight, a Cape & Smith party. We missed one given by *Tommy Smith* of Liveright's for *Judge Lindsey*, and we missed one given by *Cass Canfield* for *J. B. Priestley*. But, as it is, there are too many of these teas. The pleasantest afternoon affair we recently took in was given by *Herschel Brickell* of Henry Holt & Company for *Alan Villiers*, who wrote that book about rounding the Horn in a full-rigged ship. On the voyage his companion, the more experienced motion-picture man (for they had set forth with the idea of getting some authentic and non-hokum pictures of the sea) was unfortunately killed. We saw the pictures, however, run off in a studio on Fifth Avenue at a private view, and they were swell! There were some beautiful and breath-taking shots from aloft. If Villiers comes to your town to lecture before some club and show his pictures (as the film is not to be released to the general public), you'll be lucky to see them. His running comment on the film as we saw it was extraordinarily interesting and full of humor. . . .

By latest advices *Emily Hahn*, the talented author of that Brewer & Warren best-seller of last Spring, "Seductio ad Absurdum," is now at Stanleyville or thereabout in the Congo Belge. At her port of disembarkation she lost her luggage temporarily, as it went by mistake to the French Congo across the river. But the telegraph straightened things out, and she got a train at five-thirty A. M. to Kinshassa.

But after I caught it, it didn't go. It never goes on time. It looks like a baby-carriage, and they're very proud of it because it makes the trip in one day. So the party had breakfast, and then the station-master telephoned and said, "If you don't mind, sir, the train would like to go now."

Oh, well, if the worst comes to the worst we will compromise and go to Jamaica. (Not Long Island!) But that would mean that we should have to ask for more money!

Yours, in his fine Italian hand,

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Points of View

The Vestal Bill Once More

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*

Sir:

After reading the interesting letter of Mr. M. Llewellyn Raney in your issue of February 14th, I read the Vestal Copyright Bill. With the main purpose of the Bill, which I take to be the protection of the rights of authors in their work, I am, of course, in entire sympathy, but I agree with Mr. Raney that there is something wrong when an American citizen is "confronted by a publisher's fiat that he cannot possess the native edition of an English author's work, except by his, the American publisher's, permission." This provision, moreover, seems to me not only "without necessary connection with copyright," and so nonessential to the author's protection, but even to militate in many cases against the author's interest, as well as that of the American citizen, of the American collector, and even of the American publisher. May I, as briefly as I can, say why?

(1) The preservation of literature from the earliest times until today has always been primarily dependent on private collections. The Huntington Library, which now belongs to the public, had its origin as a private library. The New York Public Library had its foundation in the Astor, the Lenox, and the Tilden collections. Almost all of the important public libraries in this country had their inception as private collections. Even the Congressional Library owes a large part of its value to such private collections as those of Thomas Jefferson and John Boyd Thatcher, and surely the interest of the American people as a whole was considered in the recent purchase of the Vollbehr collection by Congress at a cost of one and one-half million dollars. I do not know how many book collectors in the United States are collectors of first editions of English authors, the original issues of whose books will undoubtedly be among the treasures of the future, but their number, while considerable, is, relative to the number of American purchasers of the American editions of such books, very small. It seems to me that it is not in the public interest that these men should now be prohibited from continuing their work. I say "prohibited," although it is true that under certain conditions the collector may import a particular book, because the inconvenience and time involved in meeting these conditions practically preclude such importation.

(2) I am struck by the extent to which the Vestal Bill carries the tacit assumption that the English and American editions are interchangeable commodities, and that an American buyer, if prevented from purchasing the English edition, will purchase the American edition. That, of course, is not the case. In format, in price, and in interest to the collector, the English and American editions of an English author's books often have nothing in common. If the American collector is unable to secure without embarrassment and difficulty the first edition of a new book by an English author in whom he is interested, he will, in my opinion, tend to lose his interest in the work of that author. The Vestal Bill goes so far as to provide that an American citizen travelling abroad and bringing home with him a dozen or so books acquired in England by gift or purchase, but copyrighted in this country, shall on his return home be met with the confiscation of all but five of such books. I forbear to comment.

(3) I may, I presume, assume that the Bill is intended to promote the interest of the American publisher, as well as that of American compositors and printers, in that it protects the American market against the importation of English editions of books set up and copyrighted in this country. As a matter of fact, for reasons indicated under (2) above, I am convinced that the comparatively small sale, to those collectors who desire them, of English editions of English books which are also published in this country, would tend, if permitted, to stimulate public interest in the author, and, consequently, to stimulate the sale of American editions. I happen to know that the sale by public auction in this city some years ago of the English editions of English authors collected by the late John Quinn so stimulated the demand for the American editions of some of the authors in question that the American publishers of these authors were able to manufacture in considerably larger editions and to find a profitable market for reissues of certain titles which they had allowed to go out of print. I have just noticed in the catalogue of a collection of books and autograph letters to be sold at the Anderson Galleries next week an autograph letter from Joseph Conrad to Edward Garnett which refers to the Quinn sale as follows: ". . . did you ever hear of anything so idiotic as this sale! But it is my greatest success! People who never heard of me before will now know my name. Others who had never been able to read through a page of mine are convinced that I am a great writer. If I only could let it get about (discreetly) that the whole thing was a put up job . . . and that I got my share of the plunder I believe I would become 'universally respected.' . . ."

I am convinced that every good end that is sought by the Vestal Bill in the interest of the author, the American publisher, the American collector, and the American citizen could be more effectively secured by amending the Bill to permit the importation of English editions by the holder of the American copyright for resale to American dealers without requiring a previous demand from the ultimate purchaser. In this way, a useful trade, which the passage and enforcement of the Vestal Bill in its present form would destroy, would be authorized, and authorized in a form from which American publishers and dealers would profit. Is there any good reason why the Vestal Bill should not be so amended?

CHARLES E. MERRILL, JR.

New York.

[*By the time this letter is printed, the importation clause of which Mr. Merrill writes may have been amended. We hope so, for we agree with his contentions. However, it is our opinion that it is of such importance to pass a generally satisfactory copyright bill at this time that it is far better to pass the bill with this objectionable clause, if it cannot be got rid of, than to attack the whole bill because of its presence. If this bill fails, the whole fight will have to begin again from the beginning.—The Editors.*]

A set of the *United Services College Chronicle*—the magazine to which Rudyard Kipling contributed when he was at a college in Devonshire—fetched £520 at a recent sale in New York. A first edition copy of "Soldiers Three" went for £145.

WALTER P. CHRYSLER, JR.

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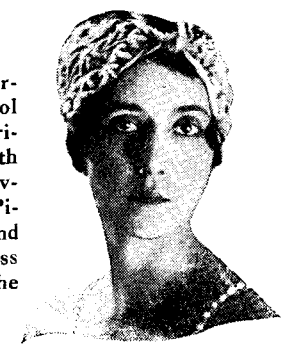

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